

Kino's Journey

The Beautiful World

1

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Kino's Journey The Beautiful World 1 Iruka Shiomiya

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"So, who's the kid?"

"My name is..."

××××× hesitated for a moment, turning slightly to look back along the road they were traveling. Beyond the red horizon, her homeland's gates sank into the distance, never to be seen again.

Facing forward once more, ××××× looked past Kino's side to focus intently on the path ahead before answering.

"My name is—"

Kino travels with the trusty talking motorrad, Hermes. The duo are always together, with Hermes providing speed, and Kino providing balance. They stay in each country for no more than three days, as a rule—enough time to learn about each destination's unique customs and people. And so Kino and Hermes journey ever onward…



"Do you like it?"

"It's all right, I suppose. So, who's the kid?"

"My name is..."

×××××× hesitated for a moment, turning slightly to look back along the road they were traveling.

Beyond the red horizon, her homeland's gates sank into the distance, never to be seen again.

Facing forward once more, ×××××× looked past Kino's side to focus intently on the path ahead before answering.

"My name is—"

Excerpt from *Kino's Journey: The Beautiful World* volume 1, chapter 5: "The Land of Adults"
Written by Keiichi Sigsawa

Then the motorrad and its two human passengers passed through the castle gates.

The furious sentry shouted something after them, but ×××××× couldn't hear it.

All she could hear was the motorrad's engine, the wind whipping through her hair, and the beating of her own heart.

The vast plains outside the country's borders, which ×××××× had never seen before, seemed to be covered in a carpet of blossoming red flowers.

The motorrad raced along the road through the plains at full speed.

"Beautiful, isn't it!" Kino shouted to be heard over the motorrad's engine and the noisy wind.

"Uh-huh!" ×××××× called back.

"It sure is!" the motorrad responded.

"Who was that?!"

The response to ××××××'s shriek came from directly beneath her. "Under your butt."

"Ah! Ohh, so it was you!"

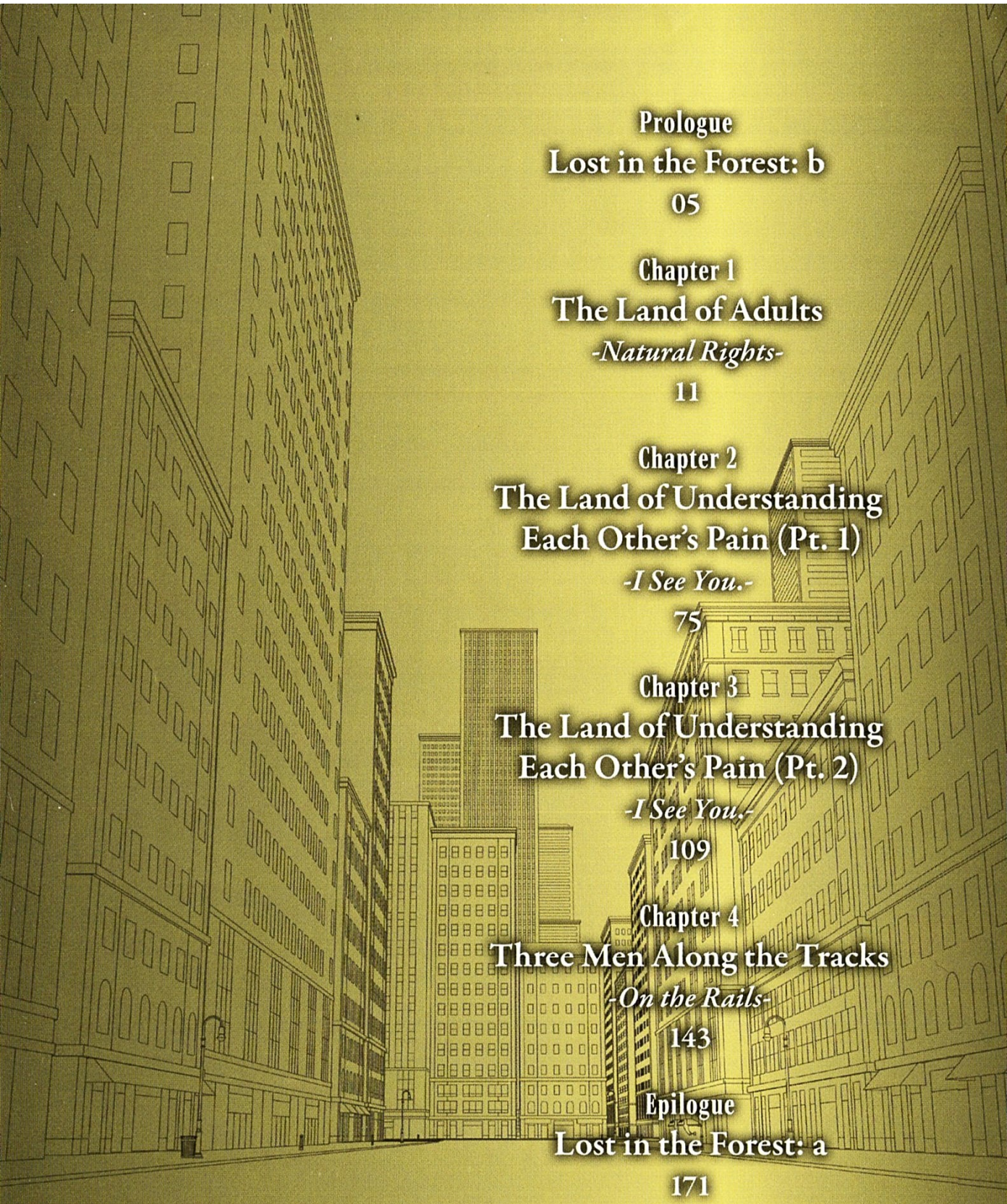
"What do you mean, 'ohh'? Of course it was. Do you see anyone else here?"

"Right. Sorry."

"No need to apologize. I wouldn't mind knowing your names, though. Who are you? And what's my name, while you're at it?"

The first to respond to the motorrad's question was the man in the brown coat. "I'm Kino. And you are Hermes."

"Hermes, huh..."



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Prologue
Lost in the Forest: b

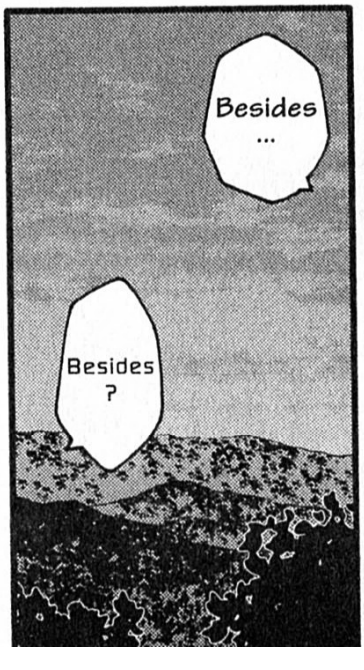

Just a feeling ?

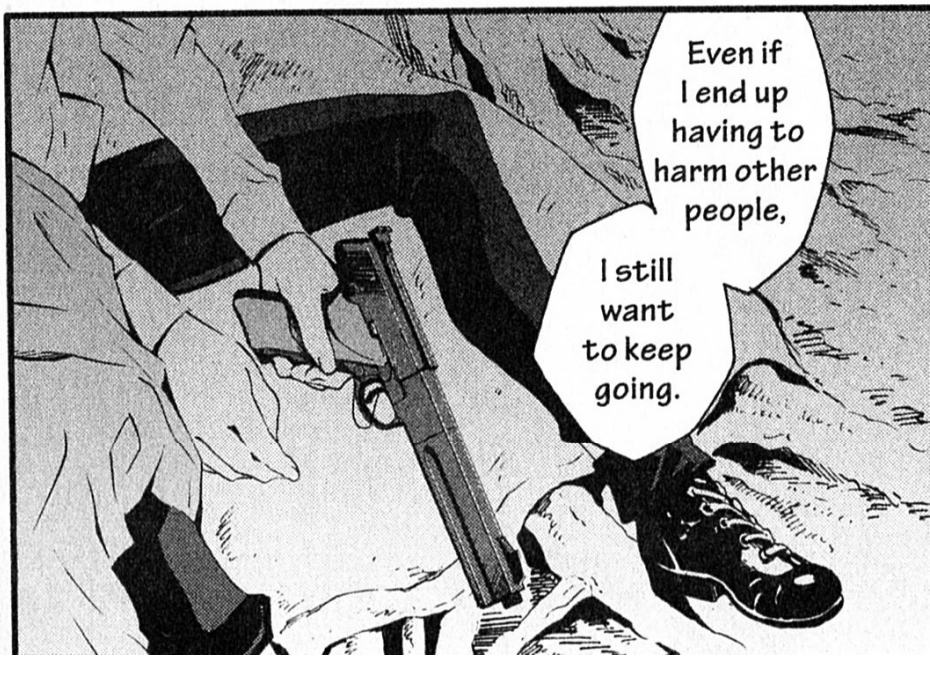

I dunno ...
I guess it's just a feeling. ...


and I don't really know why.
or maybe just a totally nasty human being...
Sometimes, I feel like a helpless, insignificant fool,


It's all so... endearing.
But whenever it happens,
the rest of the world, even other people's lives, all seem so beautiful.

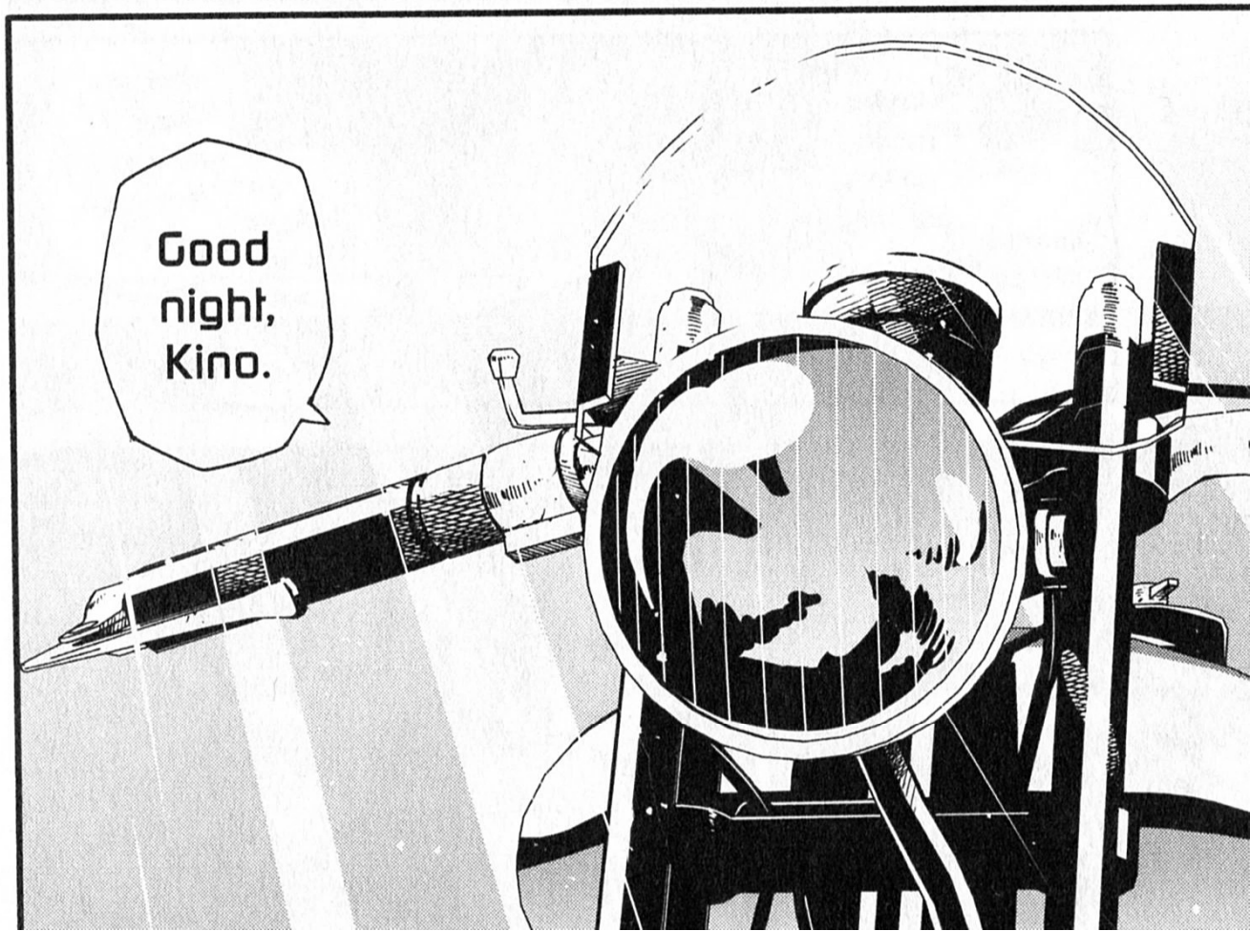

In my travels, I've come upon many sad and painful things,
but it never makes me want to end my journey.
I still enjoy it, for one thing.


Besides ...
Besides ?


Even if I end up having to harm other people,
I still want to keep going.

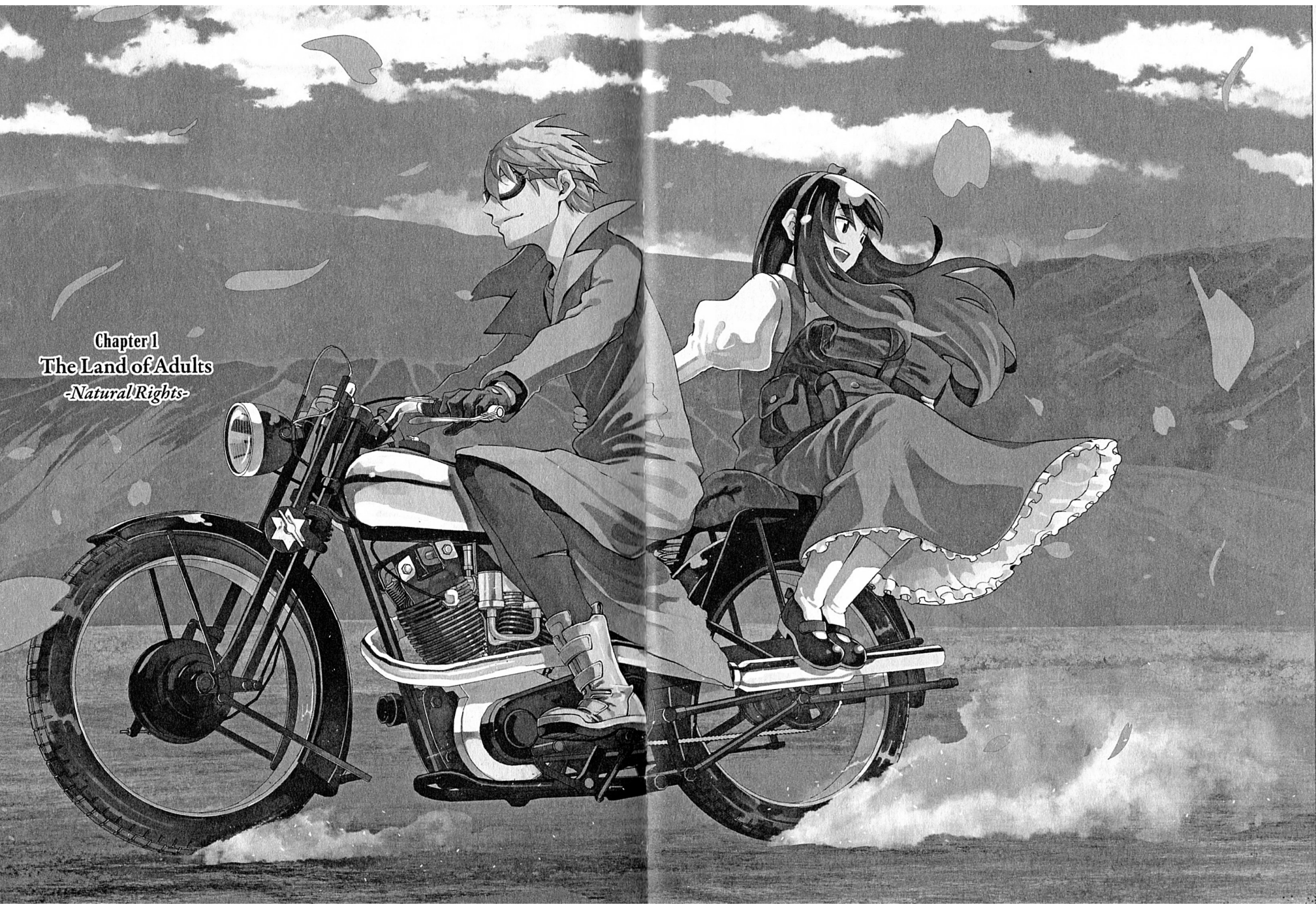

I don't really get it, to be honest.
I can stop anytime.
...
I'm not sure if I understand it myself, really.
Maybe I'm just lost.
Maybe I'm on this journey ...
to find those answers.
RUSTLE
Hmm ...
Anyway, I'm going to sleep. We've got a long way to go tomorrow.
SAAAAAAA


Good night, Hermes.


Good night, Kino.



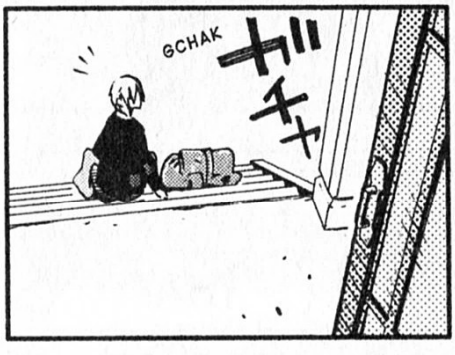

I was 11 years old when I met the traveler named Kino.
KOFF
It was the name of a flower,
To be honest, I don't remember what I was called back then anymore.
That's about all I can recall.
but if you changed the pronunciation a little, it turned into a mean insult.

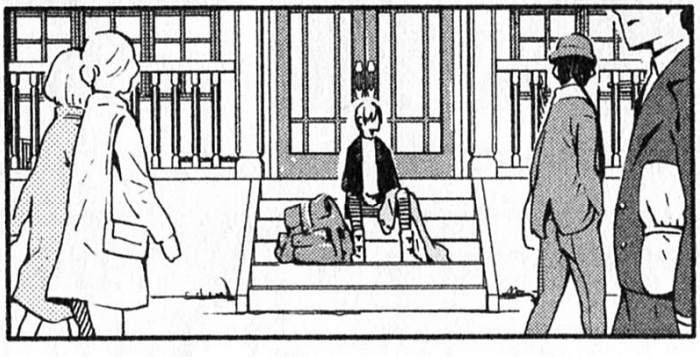

Chapter 1
The Land of Adults
-Natural Rights-


My name is Kino.
Hello there, little lady.
Ha ha! Well, thanks!
And you are?
"Kino" ...
What a nice, easy name.
My name is xxxxx.
xxxxx, eh...
That's a good name, too.


BEAM
By the way, are there any hotels around here?
I'd prefer somewhere cheap, with a shower.
THAT SOUNDS LIKE OUR PLACE!

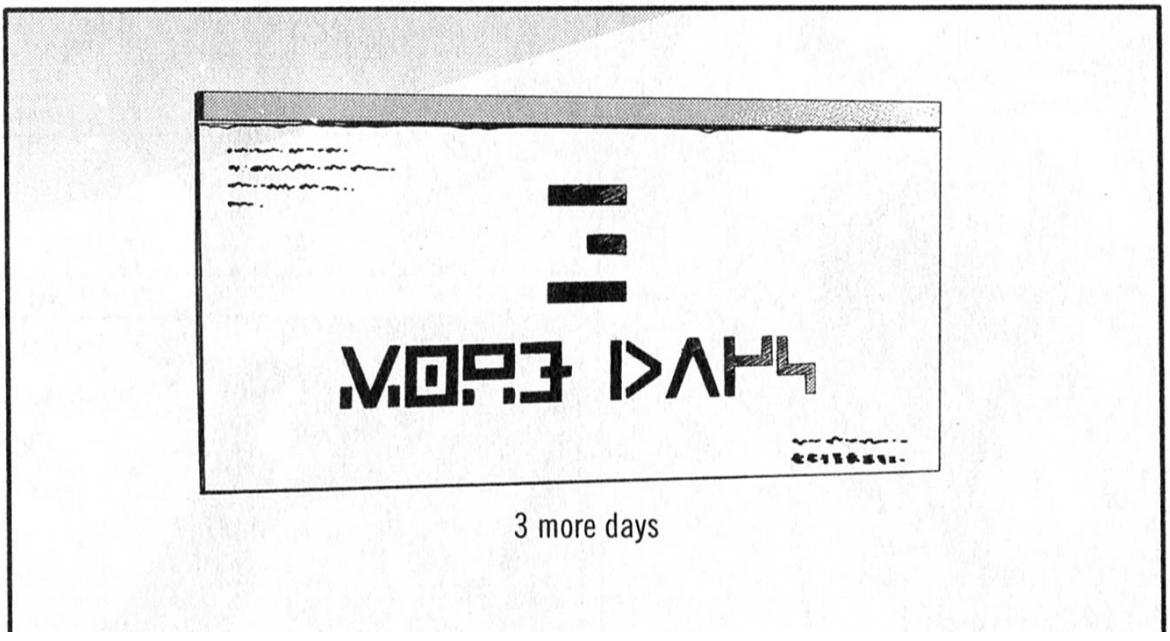


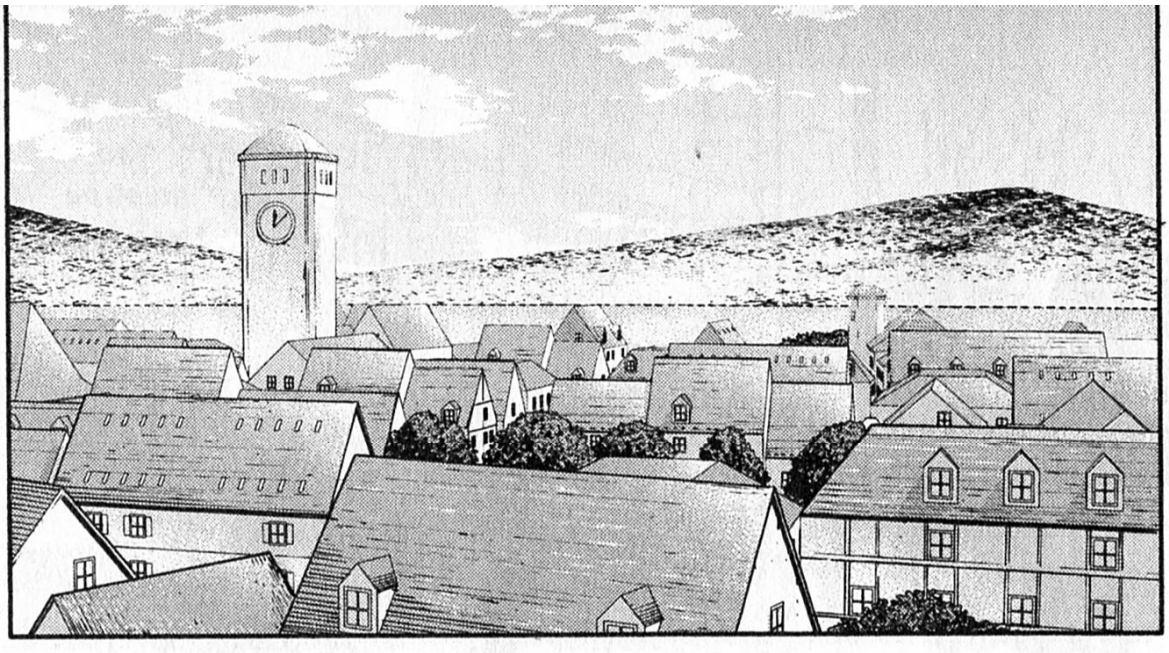

GCHAK
ガチャ



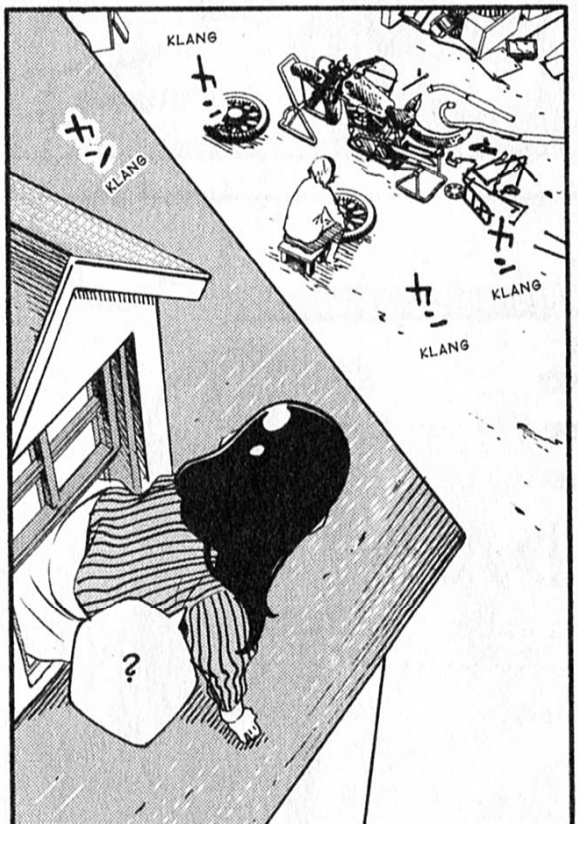

It's a pleasure to have you here!
Welcome, good traveler!

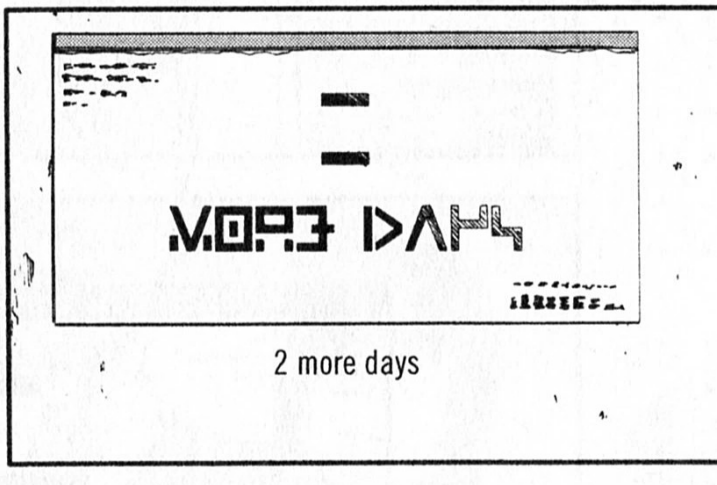

Thank you.
You must be tired from your long journey.
Please, come in and relax.


3 more days




SPLISH
SPLISH


KLANG
KLANG
KLANG
KLANG
KLANG
?


2 more days


KLANG
KLANG
KLANG



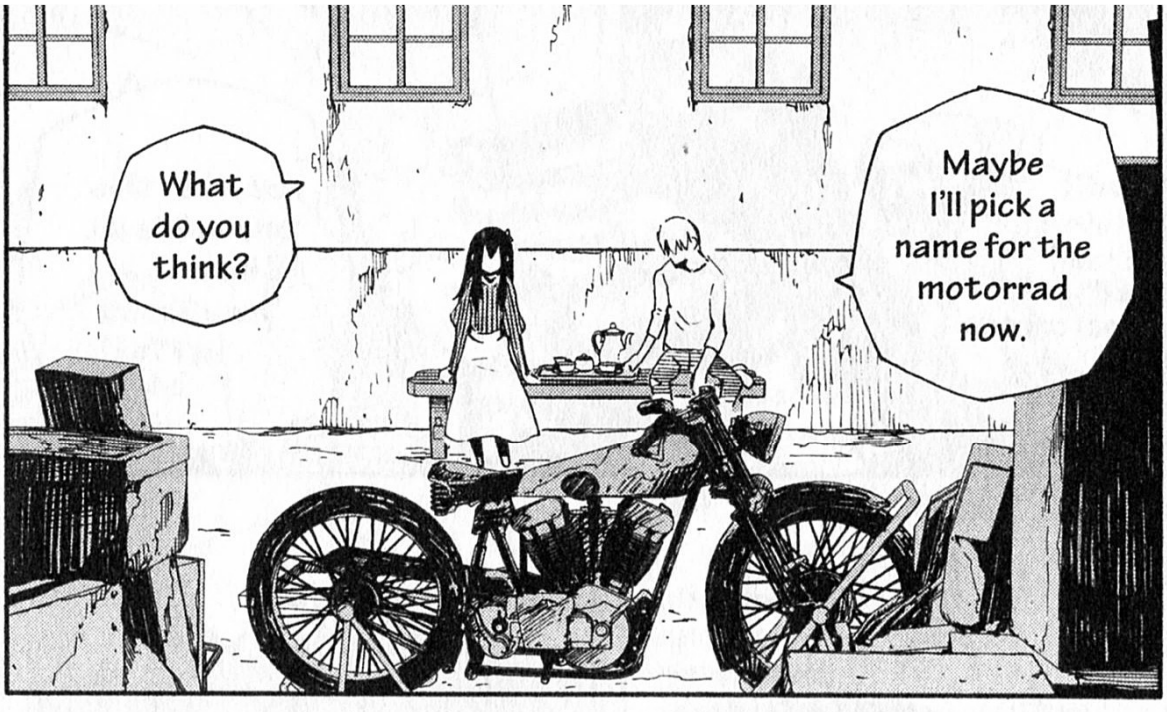
*A two-wheeled vehicle. Refers only to vehicles that do not fly.


You can fix it?
Save it, more like.
Hup.
GSHANG
I asked someone to sell it to me, but they said it was useless garbage,
so they just gave it to me.
...
It looks just like the one I used to travel with.
KCHAK
KCHAK
How long will it take?
Hmm ...
I'd say our friend here'll be running around good as new in a day or so.


Can motorrads run around?
Well...
YANK
Technically, not by themselves, no.
They need to make a contract with a rider.
A CONTRACT?
In this case, it's a promise to help each other.
KLAK
KLAK
KLAK
?


I can't move very fast by myself.
Motorrads can move fast,
but they need someone to balance them, or they'll fall.
So if I take care of the balance, the motorrad takes care of the speed.
That way the journey will be easier and more fun.
I get it now...
NOD
コクン
Uh-huh.
A contract to help each other!
Yup.


...You can talk to motorrads?
So when this one wakes up, I'll have to ask, "How about it?"
OF COURSE.

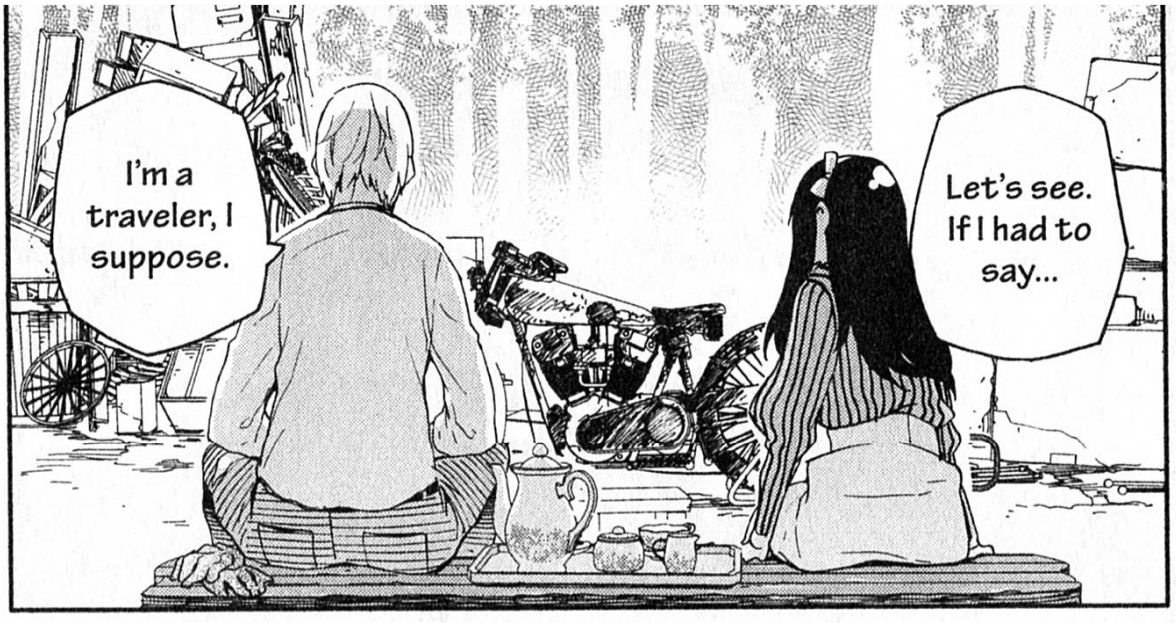

What do you think?
Maybe I'll pick a name for the motorrad now.

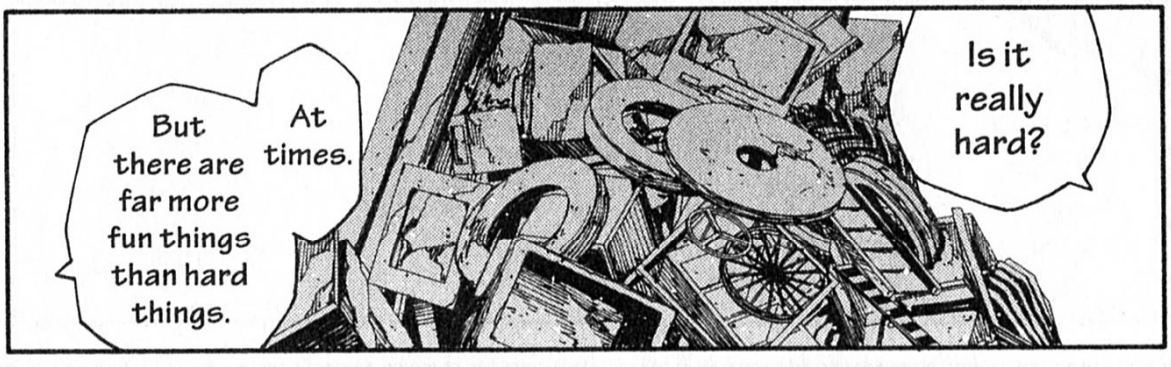

Then I pick that!
Oh yeah?


What was your old friend's name?
It was Hermes.


What kinda job do you have, Kino?


Then that's what I'll go with.


I'm a traveler, I suppose.
Let's see. If I had to say...

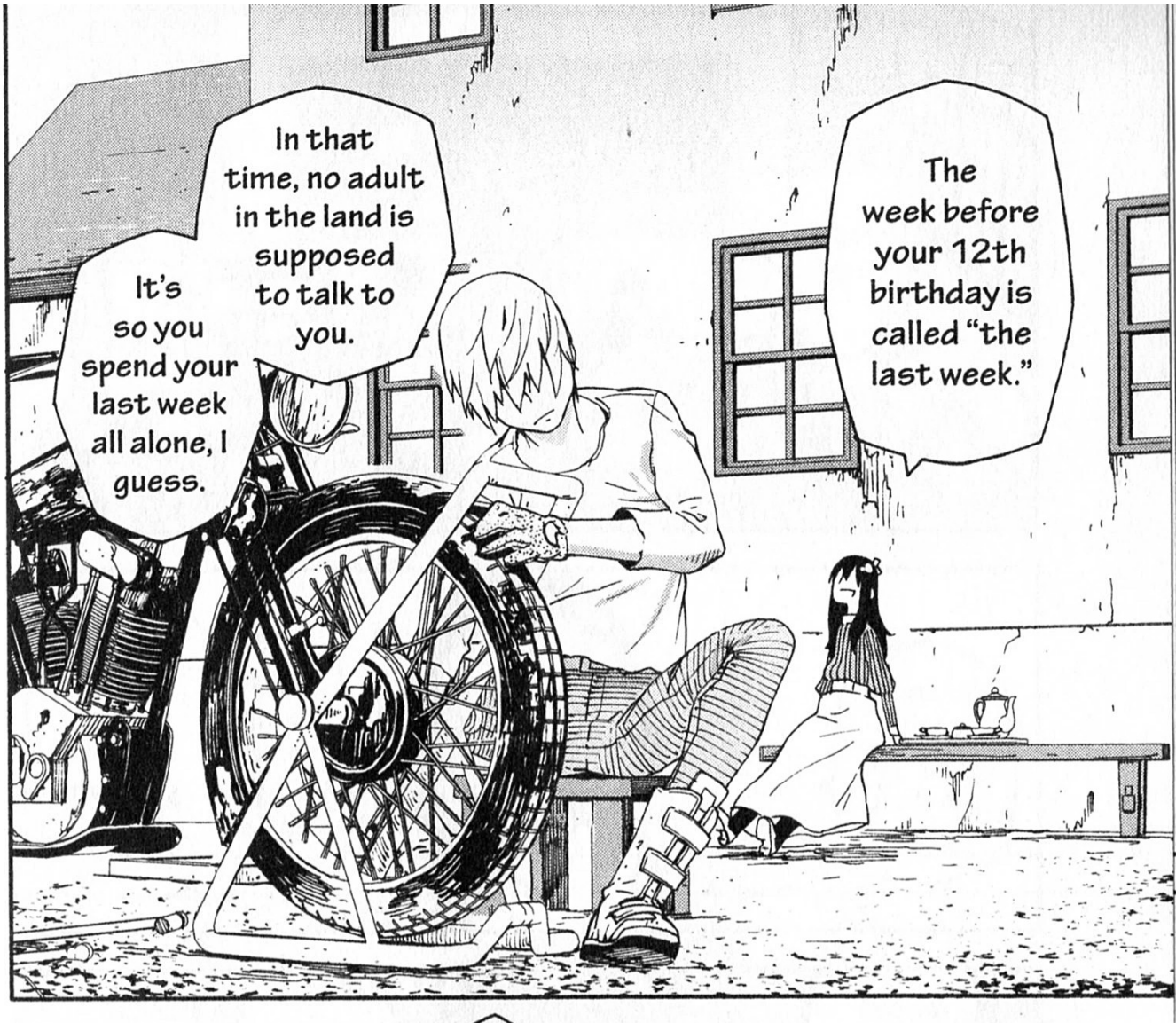

Is it really hard?
At times.
But there are far more fun things than hard things.


Is that right...
That's why, two days from now,
I'm getting the operation!


But you have to do them in order to live!
Then that's not a job!
Jobs are supposed to be hard, not fun.


... Operation ?
Uh-huh!
The operation that makes you an adult!


Listen up.
You kids can just do whatever you want.
But adults aren't allowed to do that,
because adults have to do their jobs.
Even if they don't want to or they think it's wrong,
they have to do it, no matter what.
It can be very hard.
That's why, when you turn 12, we open up your head and take out the child inside.
You'll turn into perfect adults overnight.
Your mom and dad will be very happy.

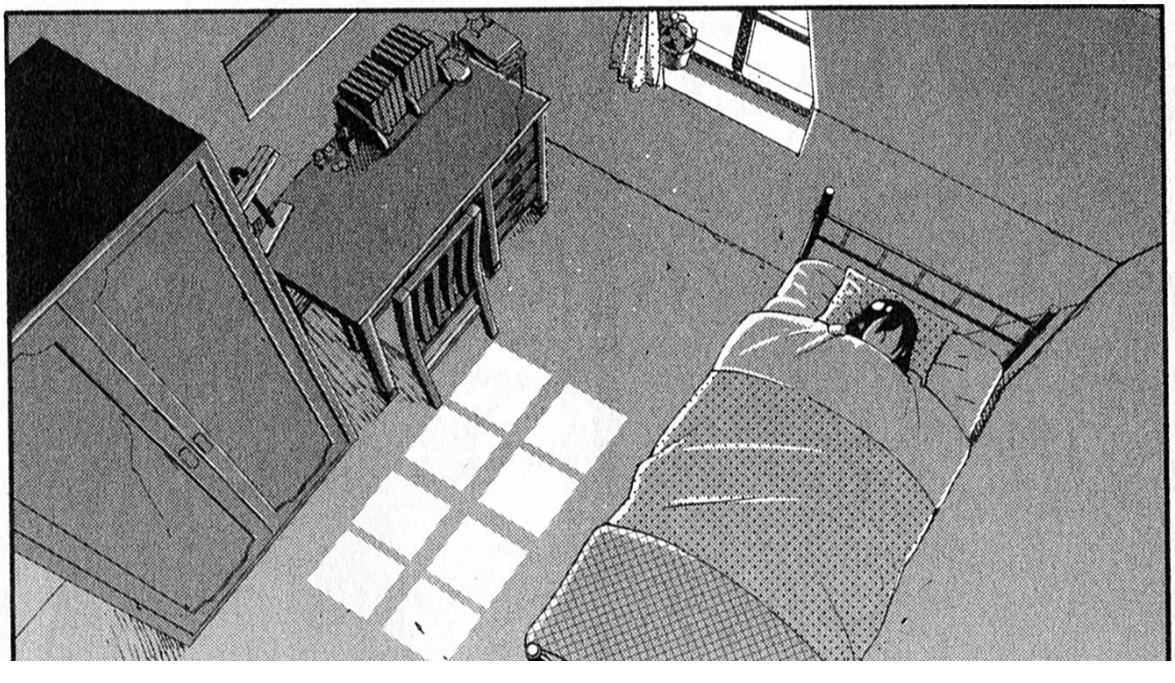

The week before your 12th birthday is called "the last week."
In that time, no adult in the land is supposed to talk to you.
It's so you spend your last week all alone, I guess.


How come?
Thanks to the operation, any child can become a proper adult!
...


But nobody will tell me why.


Sounds pretty violent to me.
KCHAK
KCHAK
...


I DON'T KNOW
WHAT A "PROPER ADULT" IS SUPPOSED TO BE.




Is such a life forced on you by this "operation" really any fun, I wonder?
Does doing something you don't want to make you a "proper adult"?
Aren't you an adult, Kino?
...
what are you, Kino?
What am I, you ask?
Not in the way you're thinking, at least.
I don't think I'm a kid exactly, either.
Then you're a kid?
Then ...

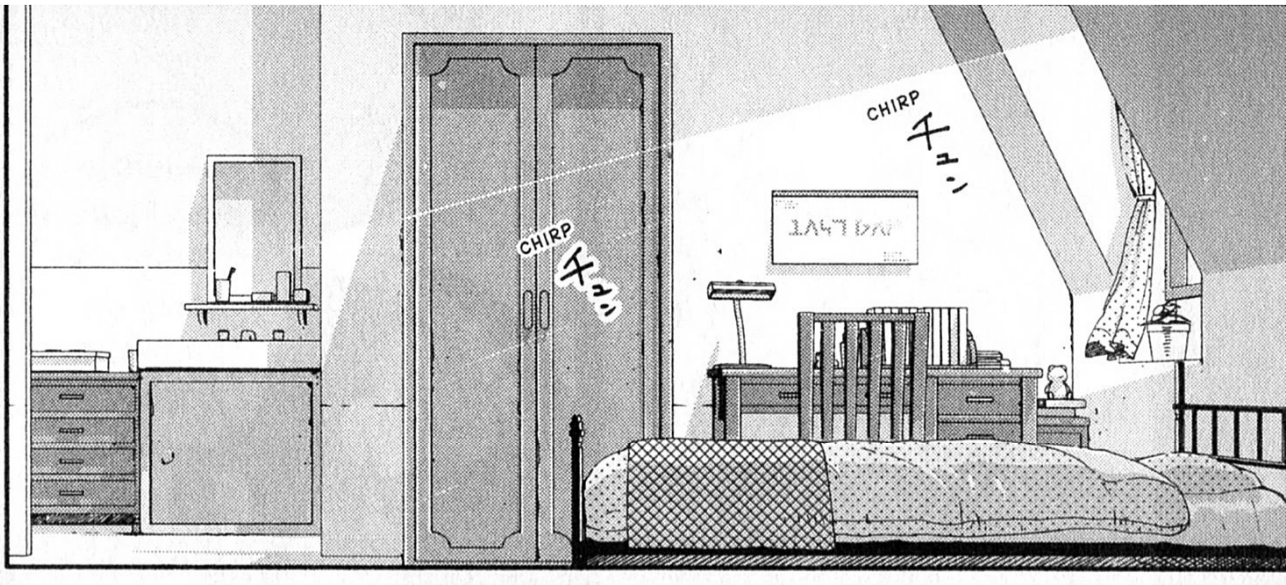

I like traveling, so I'm on a journey.
That's not enough to live on, of course, so I sell medicinal herbs and rare items I find.
I guess you could say that's a job.
But really, I'm just traveling ... doing what I like.
Doing what you like...
I'm just "Kino."
A man named Kino.
That's all.

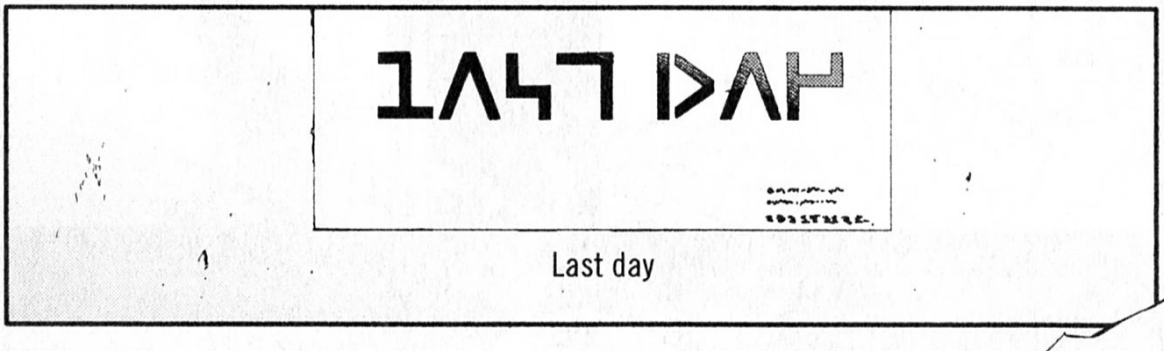

What do you like doing the most?
!
I like singing !
Hey, me too.
I often sing while I travel.
How was that?
...


heh
heh
Really, really bad...
I might not be any good, but it's still fun.
ahem


Wow! You're really good!
That's the best singing I've ever heard.
KLAP
KLAP
KLAP
Since you're so talented, why don't you become a singer?
I can't become a singer
'cause my mom and dad aren't singers.
?
...


...
I see.
Adults have children so they can carry on their work, right?
So that's how it is in your country...

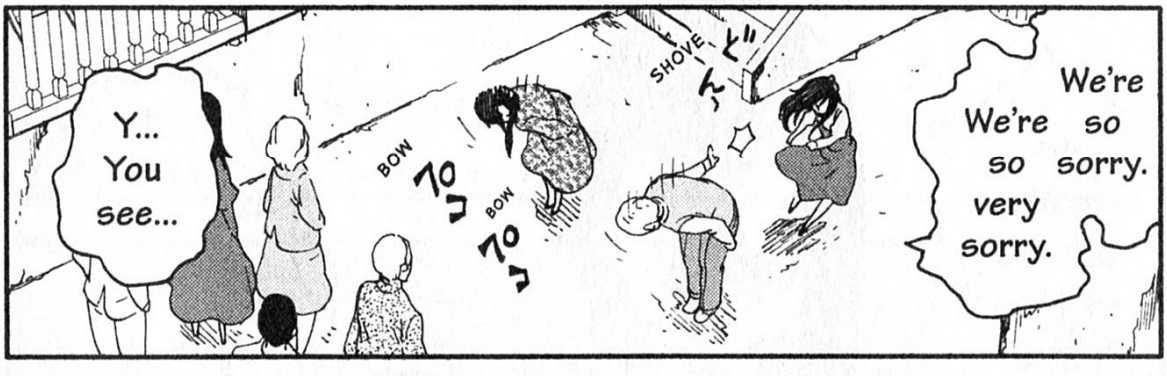

CHIRP
チュン
CHIRP
チュン

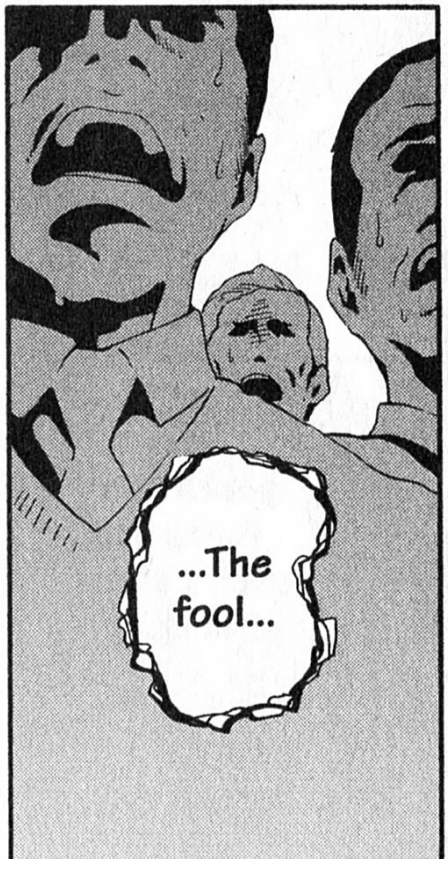

LAST DAY
Last day


YOU IDIOT! WHAT ARE YOU SAYING ?!
DON'T BE A CURSED FOOL!!


Are you mocking us adults?!
Do you want to be a child for the rest of your life?!
SLA
MM
Apologize right now, xxxxx!!
To all the adults of this land!
To your father! To me!
Say you'll never say things like that again!
Right now !!
Say you're sorry for having such a stupid thought!


Why all the shouting over here?
Did something happen?
Please calm down. You're adults, after all.

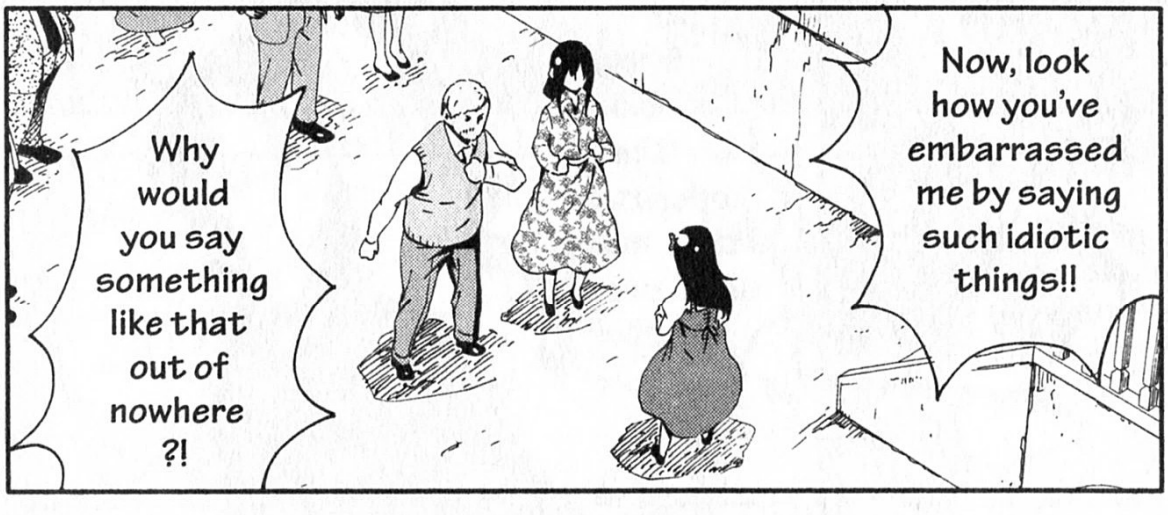

We're so sorry. We're so sorry. very
Y... You see...
SHOVE-
どん
BOW
ペコ
BOW
ペコ


...The fool...


?!
Our daughter said she doesn't want to get the operation tomorrow.


You must have been brought up wrong!!
You think you can become an adult without the operation ?!
Don't you know how important it is?!
She's mocking the operation that made us all proper adults!
Child or not, you won't get away with this!


GLARE
!
We have no one to blame but ourselves.
I'm terribly sorry.


Why would you say something like that out of nowhere ?!
Now, look how you've embarrassed me by saying such idiotic things!!


IT WAS THAT FILTHY TRAVELER, WASN'T IT?
HE'S THE ONE WHO PUT SUCH INHUMAN THOUGHTS IN YOUR HEAD!!


I... I just ...


GASP


BRRT
RATTLE
カラ


Hey, you!
You dirty bastard traveler!!


Hm.
Engine seems to be working fine, too.


GLANCE
Is this what that "operation" does to people?

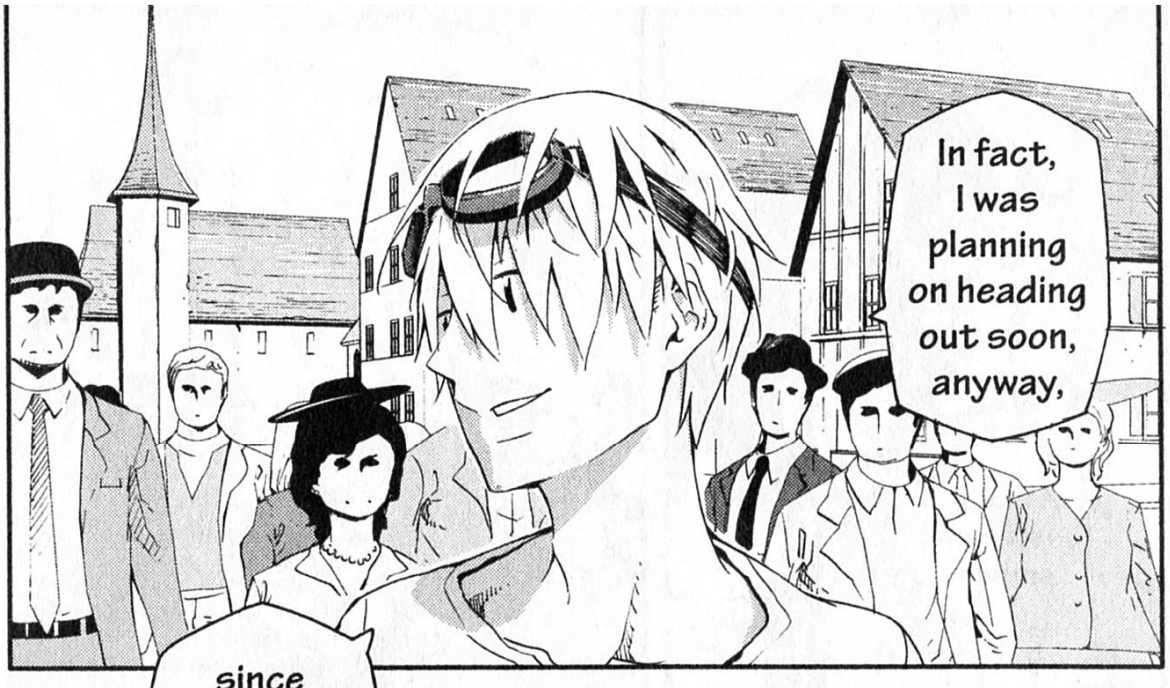

Maybe you shouldn't get it after all.
PFFT
Are you listening, you fool?!
haah...
What is it?
Get on your knees, right now!
Apologize to me, my wife, and everyone in this country!
Apolo-gize?
For what, exactly?



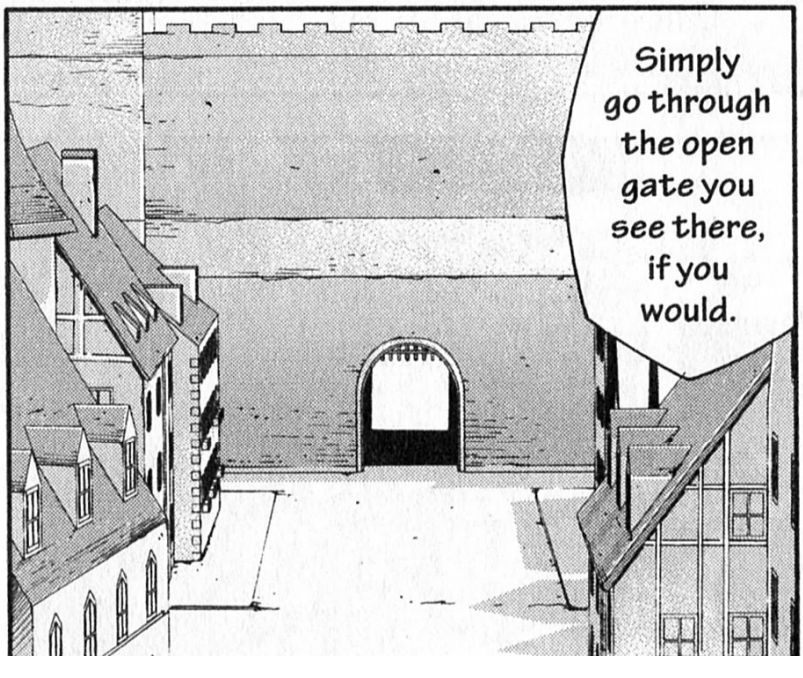
Now, now, that's quite enough.




Who's that?
A really important person in this land.
Mr. Traveler.
As I'm sure you know, every land, every family, has their own unique customs,
and it's not something outsiders like you can do anything about.
...
Wouldn't you agree?
Yeah, I guess so.

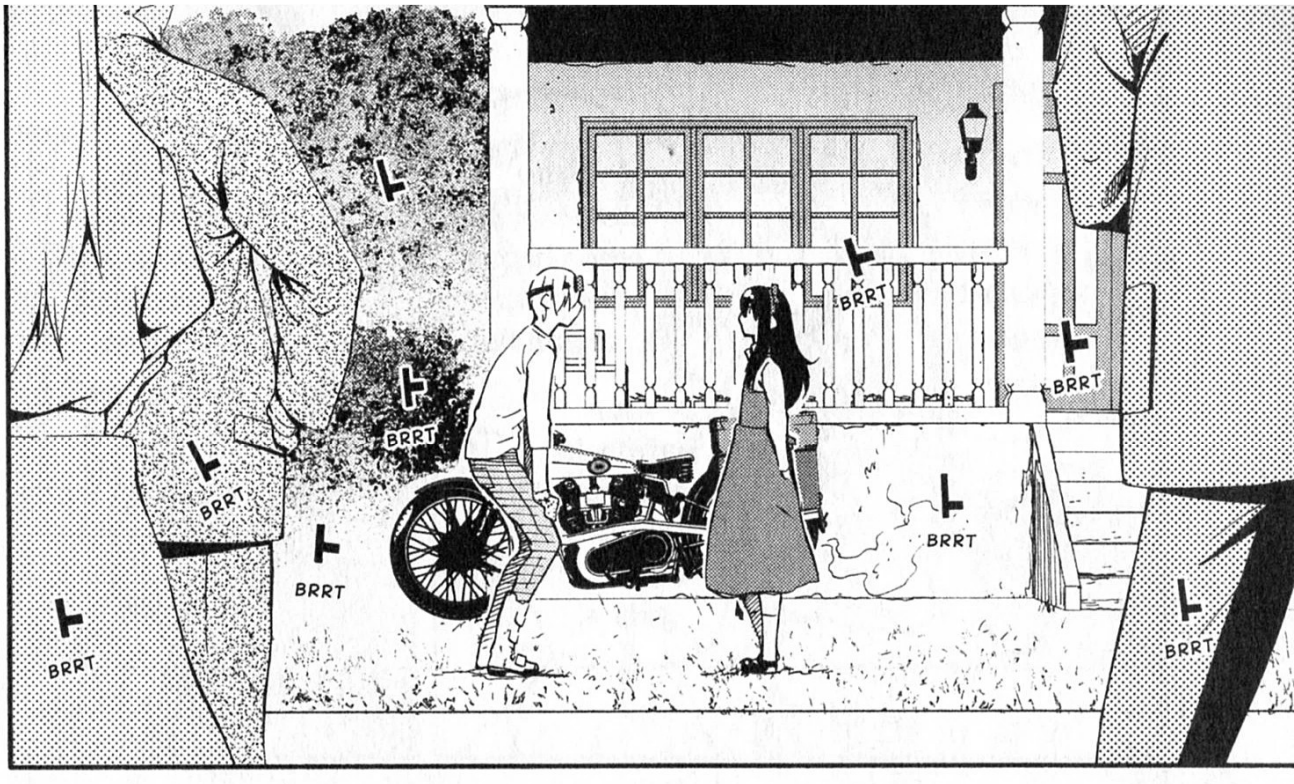

In fact, I was planning on heading out soon, anyway,


since I get the feeling I'll be killed if I stay much longer.


Simply go through the open gate you see there, if you would.


...
No exit proce-dures will be neces-sary.


After all...
...
You entered our land through the proper channels.
Your safety is assured until you leave our gates.
Still, I shouldn't think you would be killed.
this is the Land of Adults.

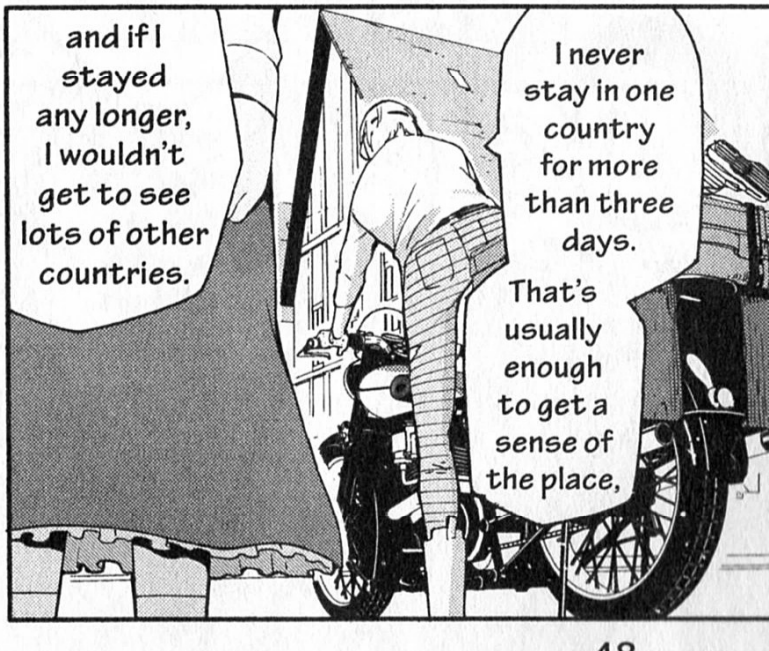

BRRT
BRRT
BRRT
BRRT
BRRT
BRRT
BRRT


Kino ...
Are you really leaving now?

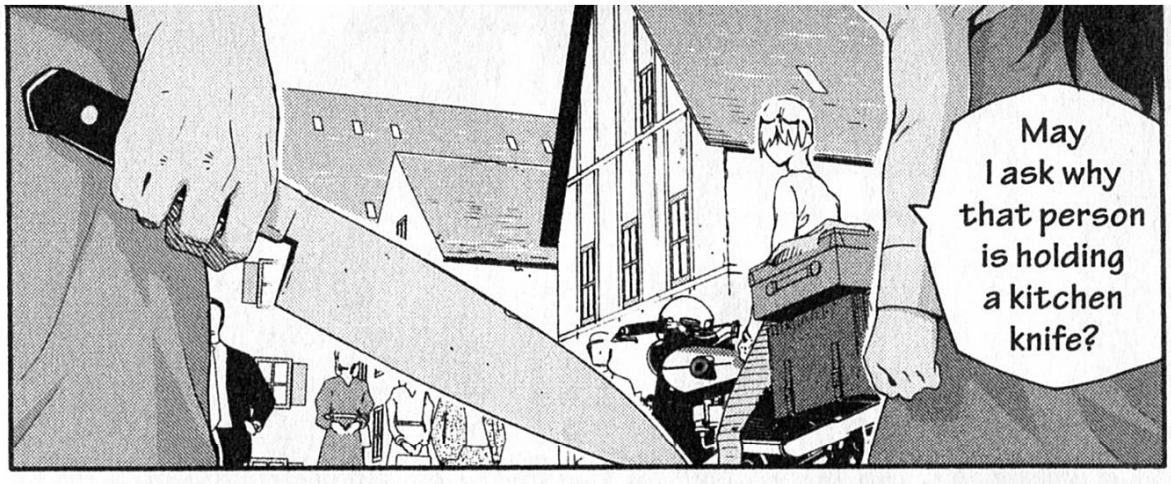

I guess this is goodbye, xxxxx.

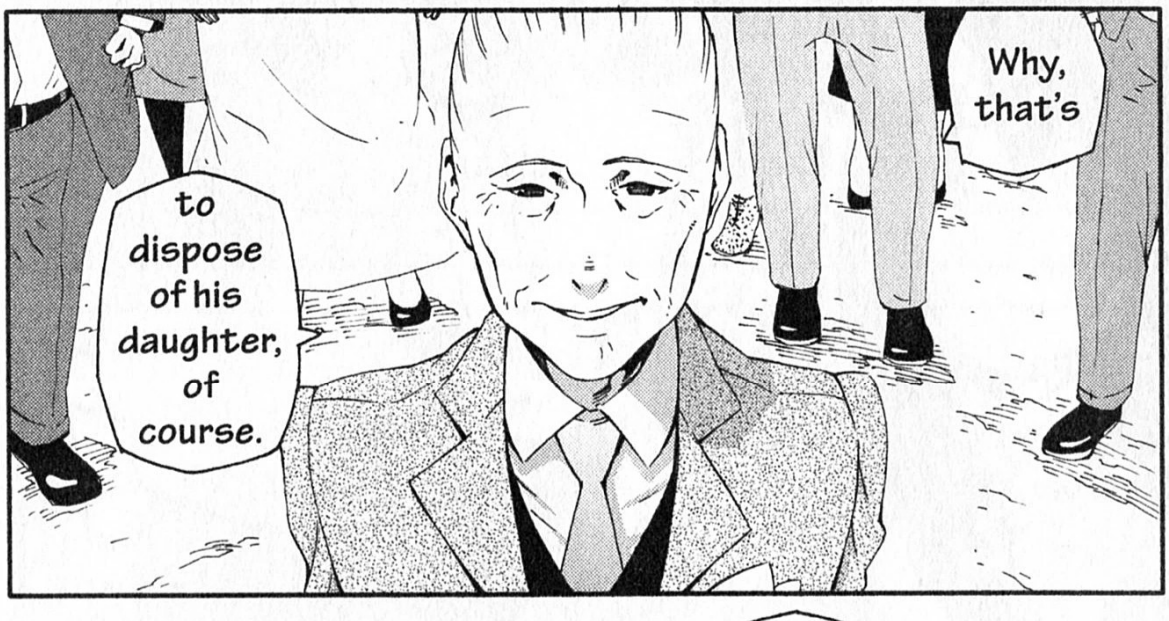

Well, take care ...




and if I stayed any longer, I wouldn't get to see lots of other countries.
I never stay in one country for more than three days.
That's usually enough to get a sense of the place,




May I ask why that person is holding a kitchen knife?

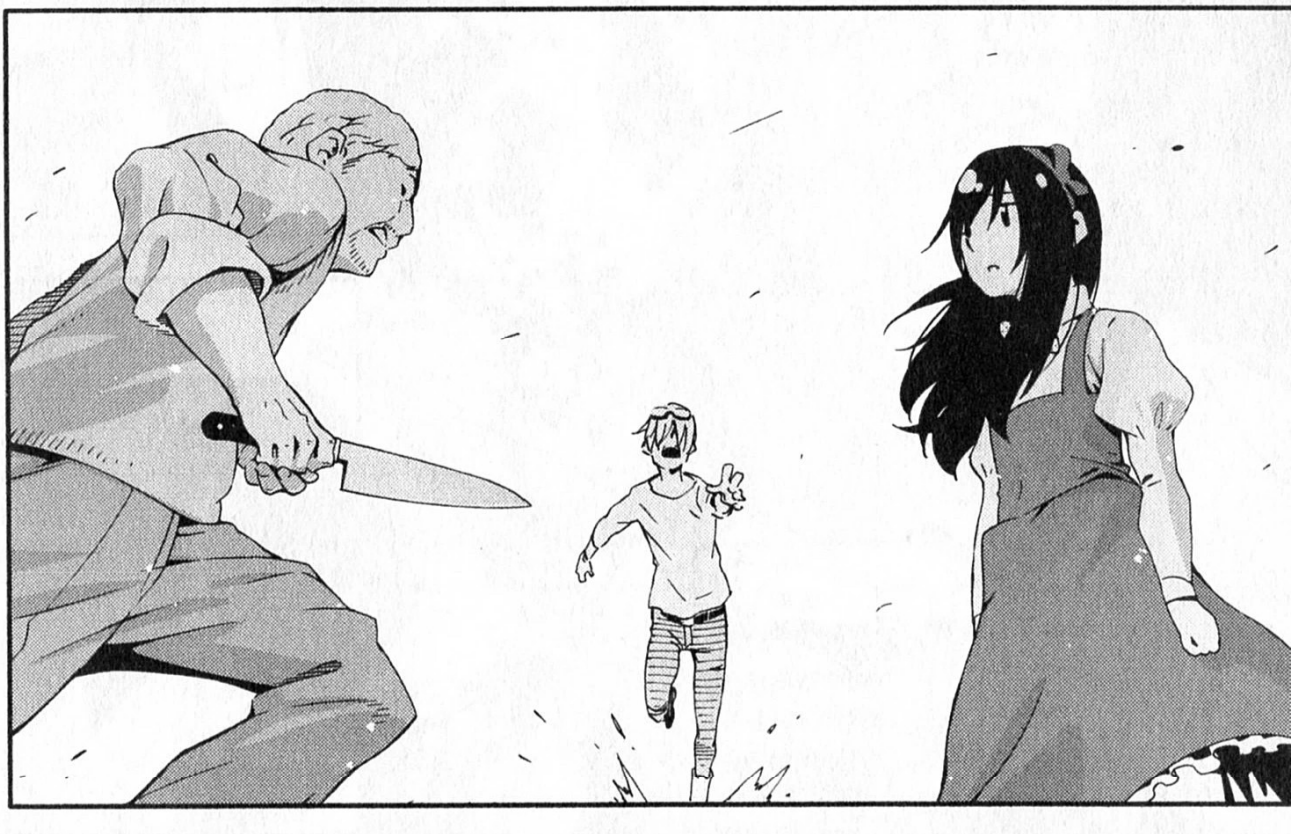

Why, that's
to dispose of his daughter, of course.


She has defied her parents, her superiors, by rejecting our great operation.
Children are invariably the property of their parents,
and parents, naturally, have every right to dispose of a failure.


...What did you say?


Guess this one's a dud...
...


XXXXX
!



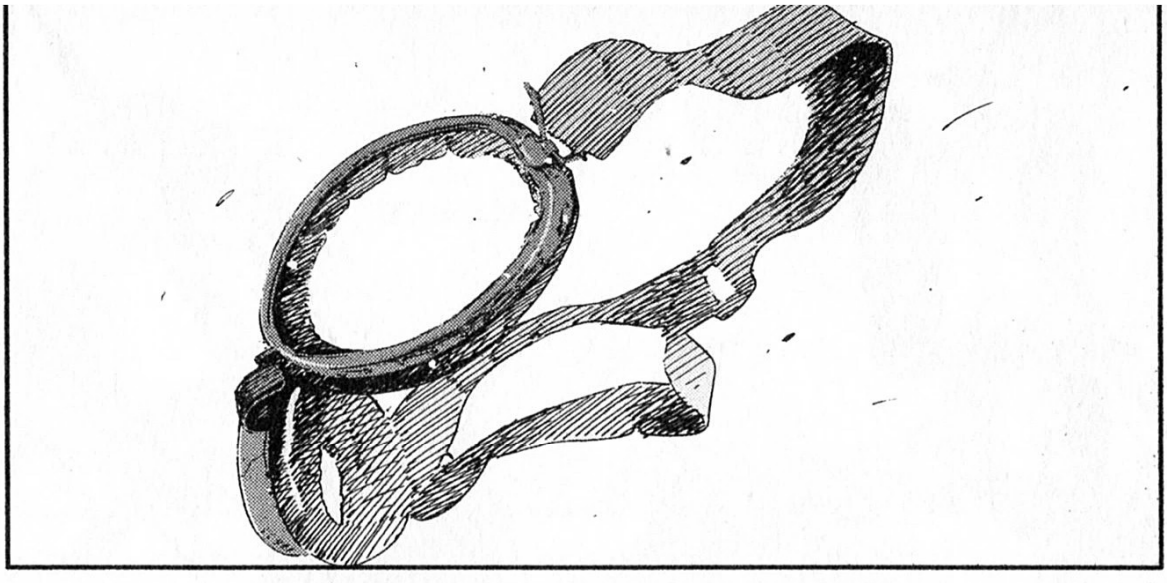

SHNG







STABBB





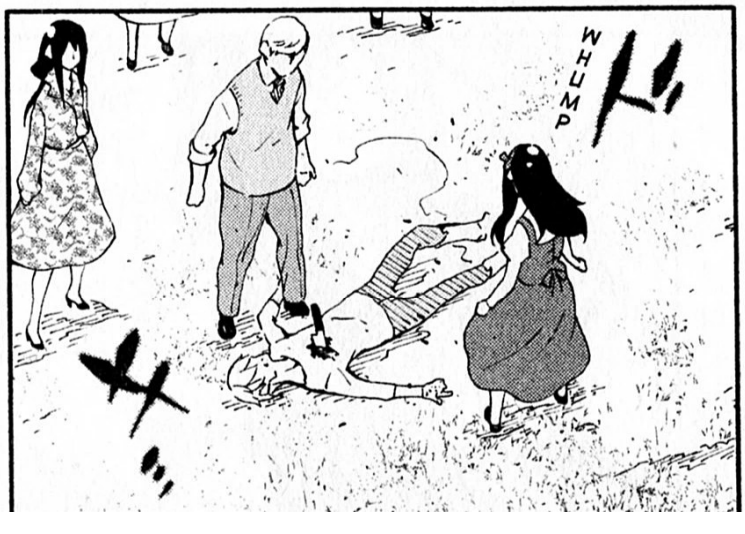

...
?

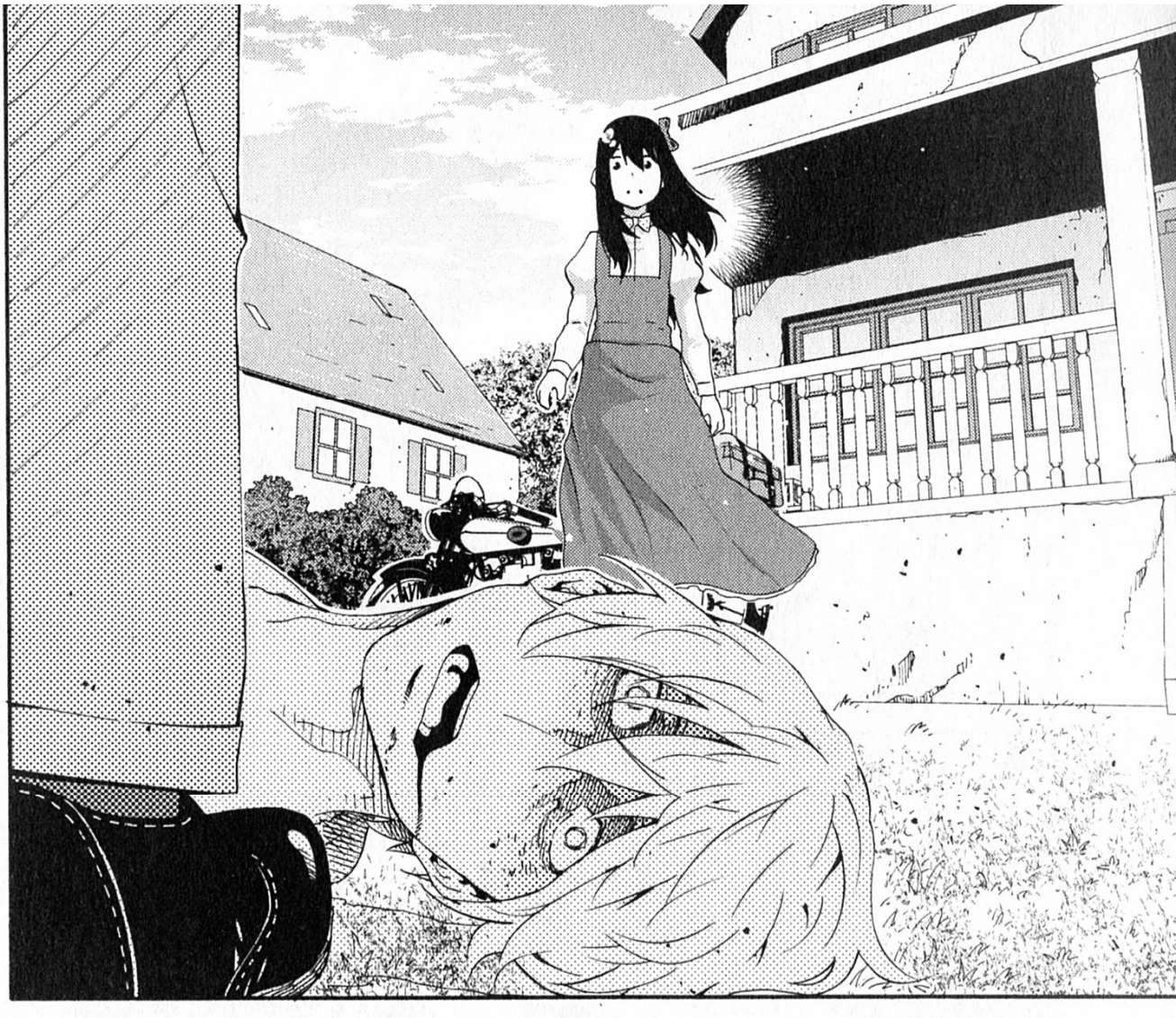


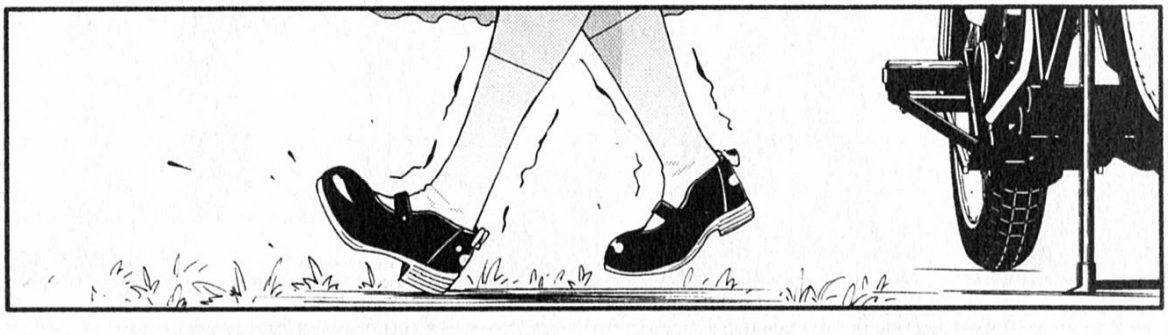

GA
SHANG
DO

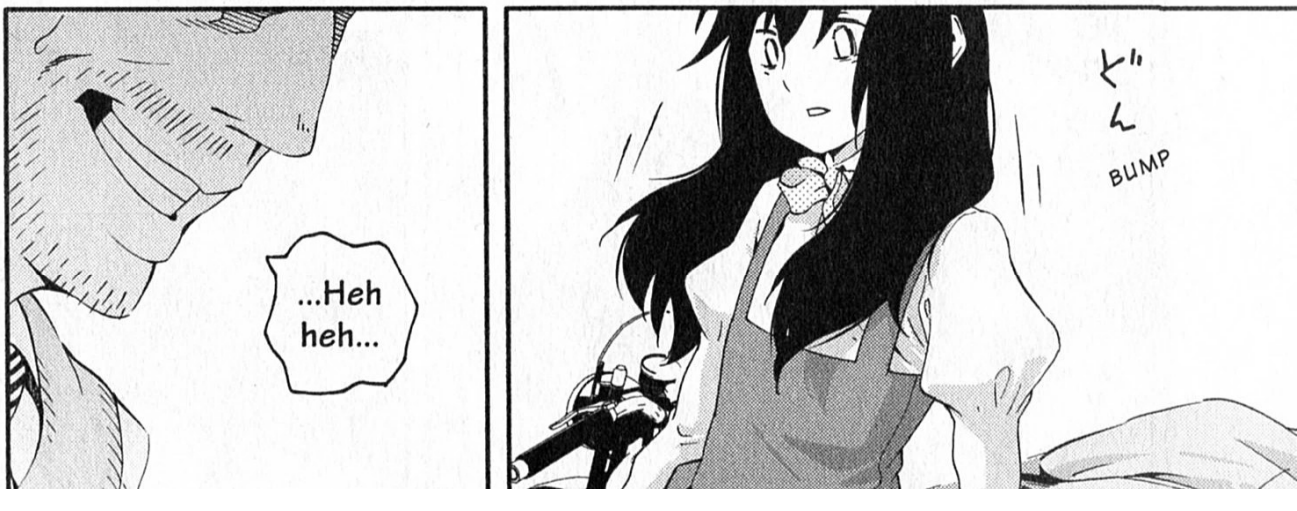

Gah...


SLIP...
SLIDE...


WHUMP



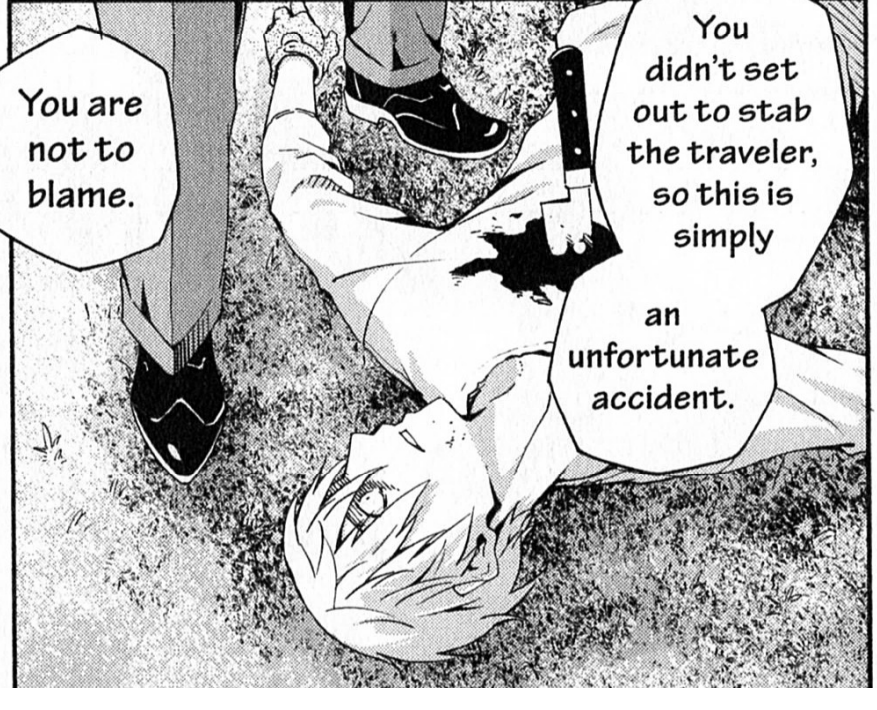


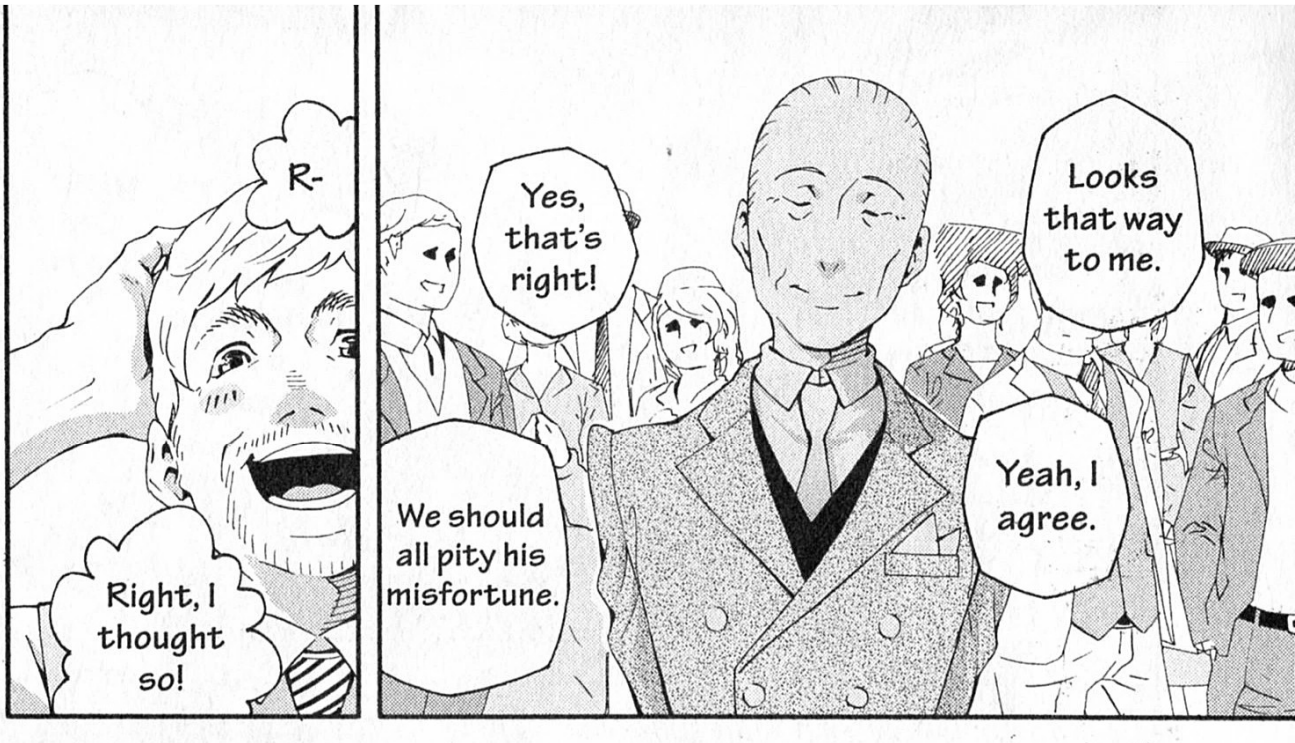

...Heh heh...
ドン
BUMP

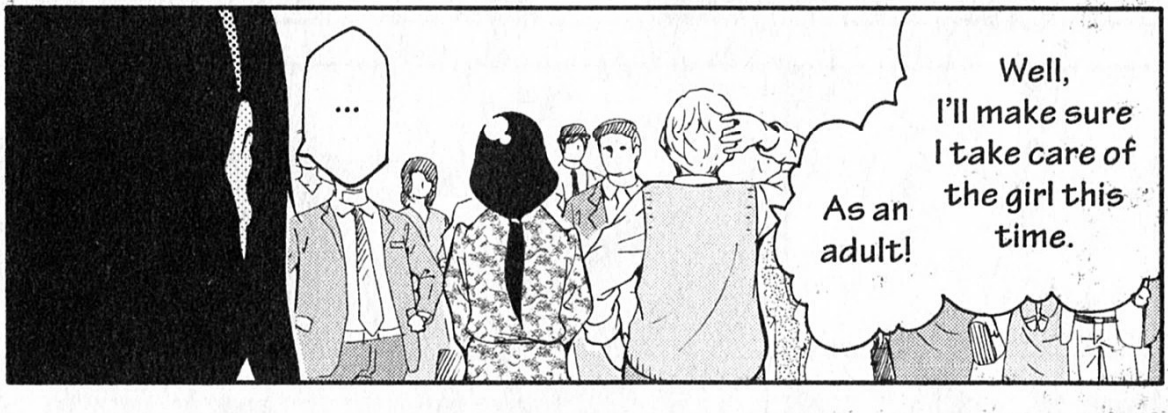

and got stabbed with the knife that was meant for my kid!
This person just jumped in the way
WHAT ON EARTH ?


Hmm.


What should we do in a case like this, eh?


You didn't set out to stab the traveler, so this is simply an unfortunate accident.
You are not to blame.
ISN'T THAT RIGHT, EVERYONE ?


R-
Right, I thought so!
Yes, that's right!
We should all pity his misfortune.
Looks that way to me.
Yeah, I agree.

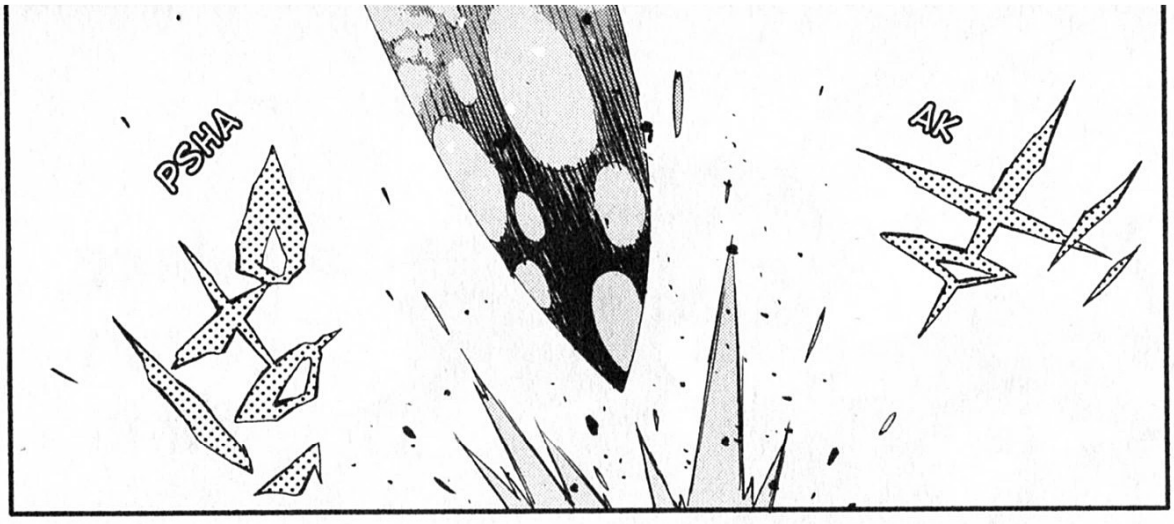

...
As an adult!
Well, I'll make sure I take care of the girl this time.

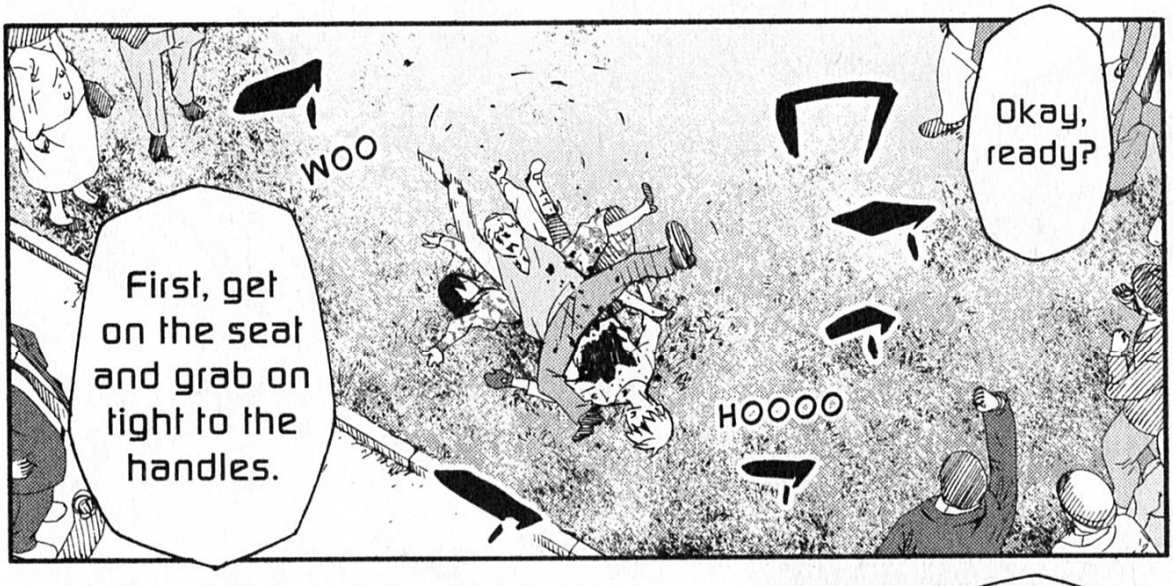

I'm so glad.


Oh. So I'm going to die...
without ever becoming a "proper adult"...


Have you ever ridden a bike?
YANK
YANK
...Hey, you.
One more pull!
You can do it!
Yeah ... But it's better than surviving just to get the operation.
Hmm. So you want to die?
Yaah
Yaah
Sure.
You're gonna die if you stay here, right?
Then I guess ...
then I don't want to die.
...If I have a choice...

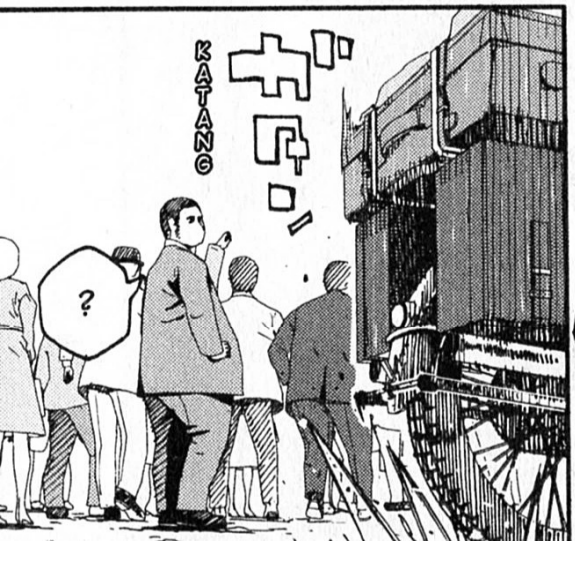

you'd
better
take the
third
option.

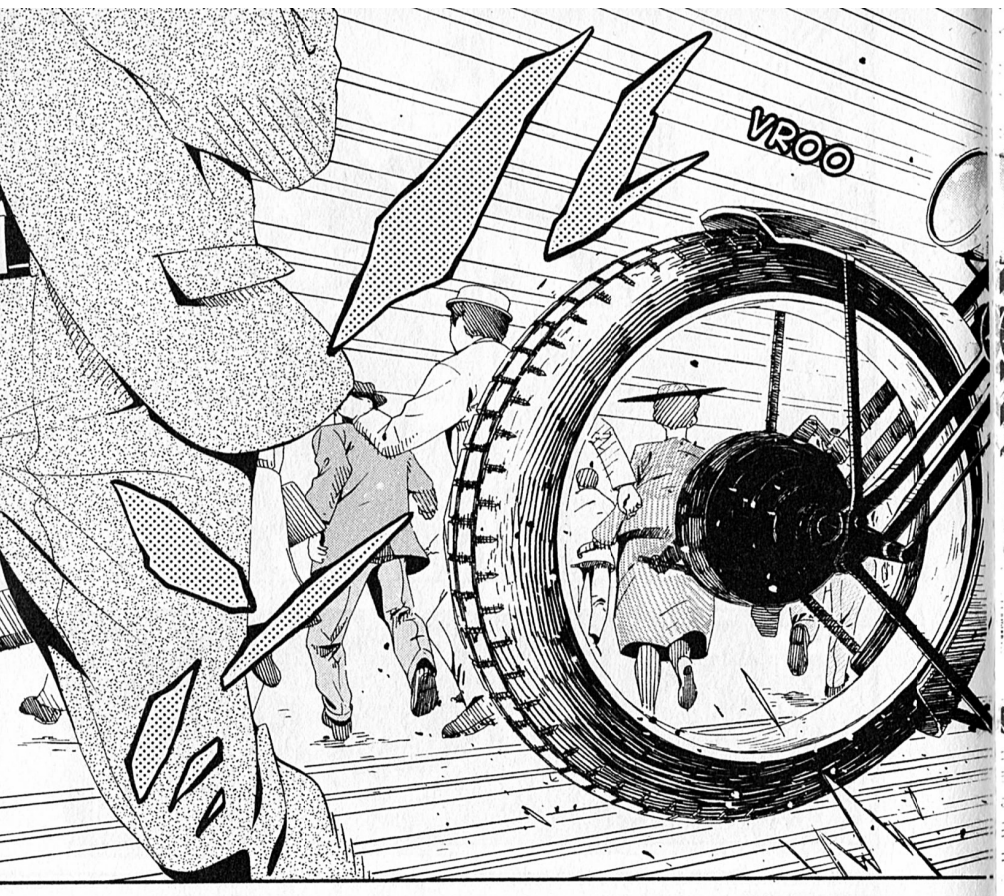

PSHA
AK

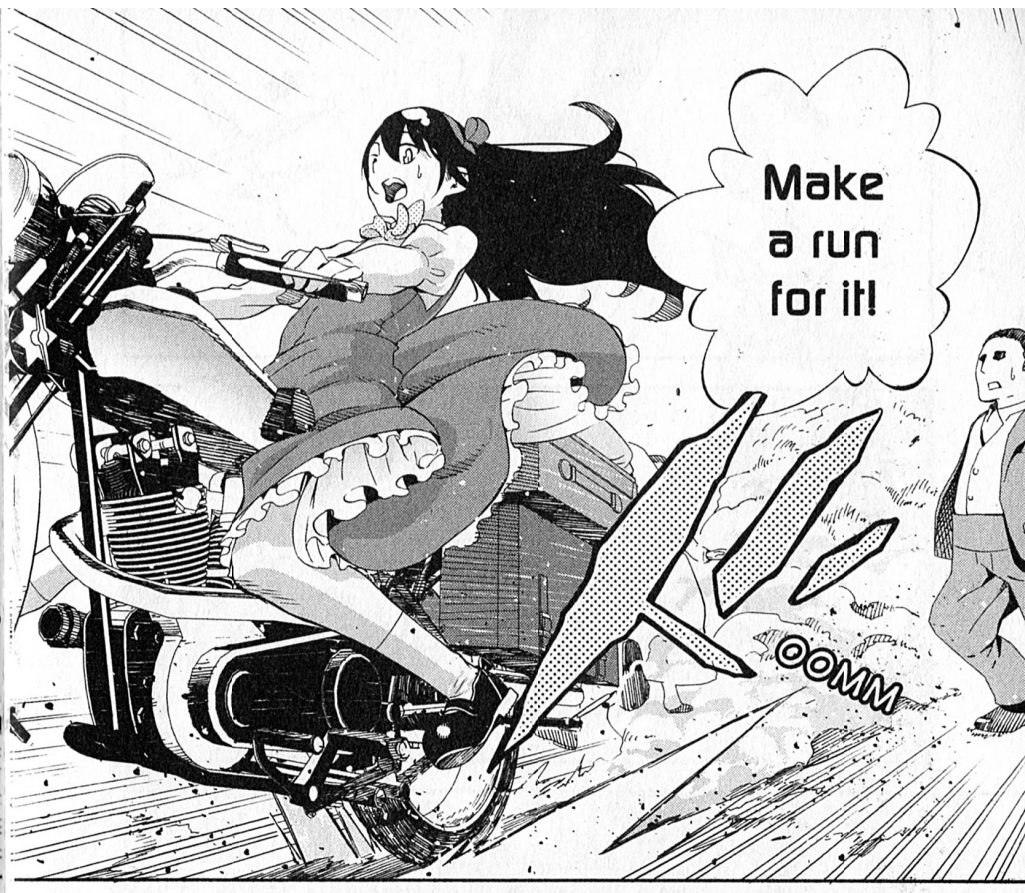

WOO
HOOOO
Okay, ready?
First, get on the seat and grab on tight to the handles.


And then what do I do?

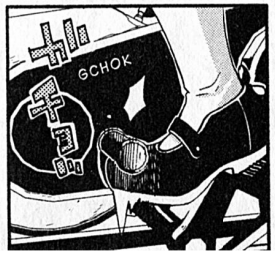

ha
wah
ha
ha
ha
ha
ha
ha
Twist the right handle down and lean forward.
Then just think of it as riding a faster, heavier bike.

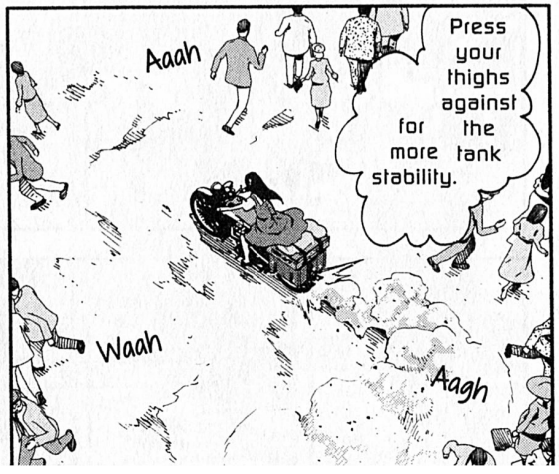

KATANG
?


VROO


Make a run for it!
OOMM


Great. Next, change gears like this...
Yeah.


GCHOK

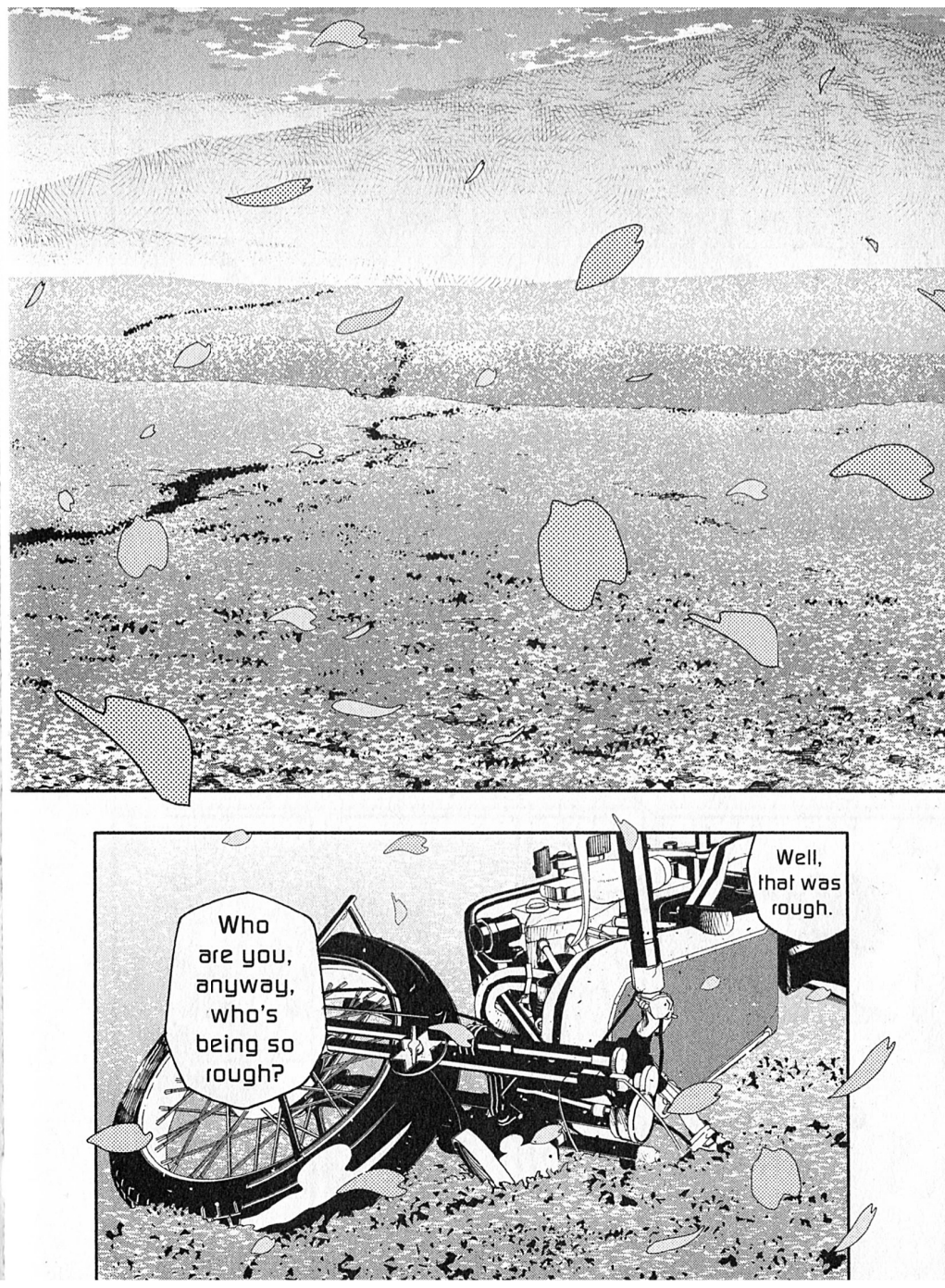

Press your thighs against the tank for more stability.
Aaah
Waah
Aagh

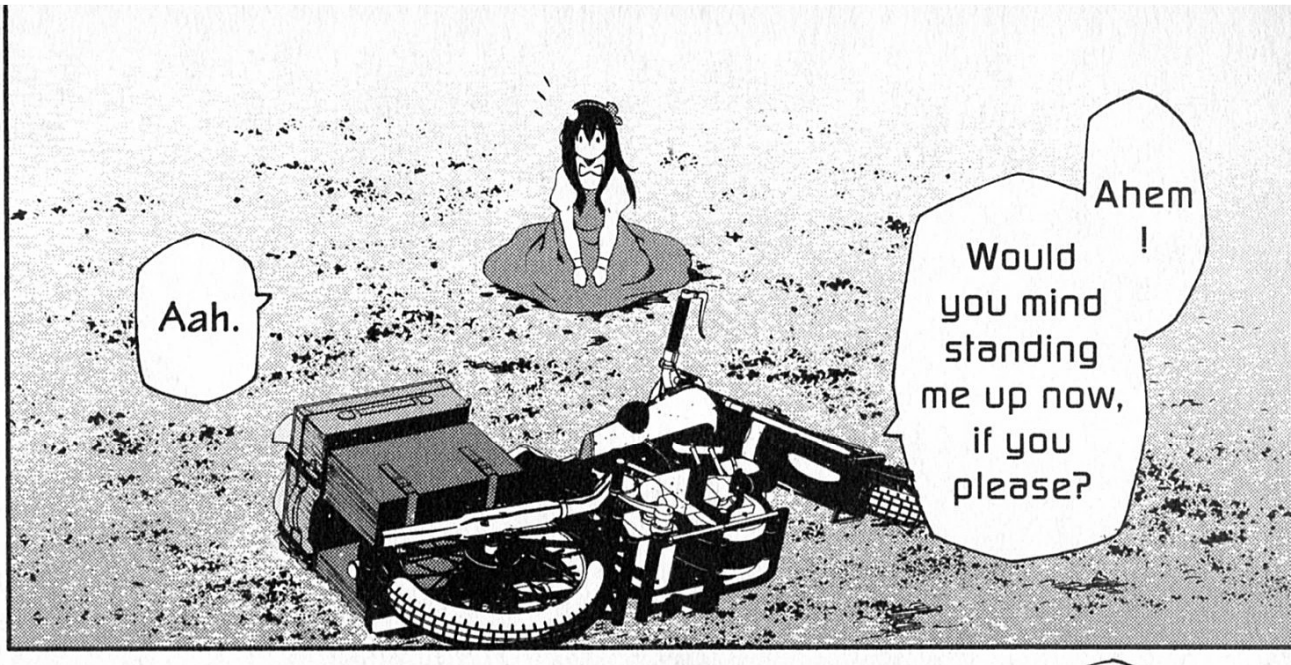

W-Wah!
Hey, you're doing great!
VRR


ドVRR
ドVRR
ドVRR

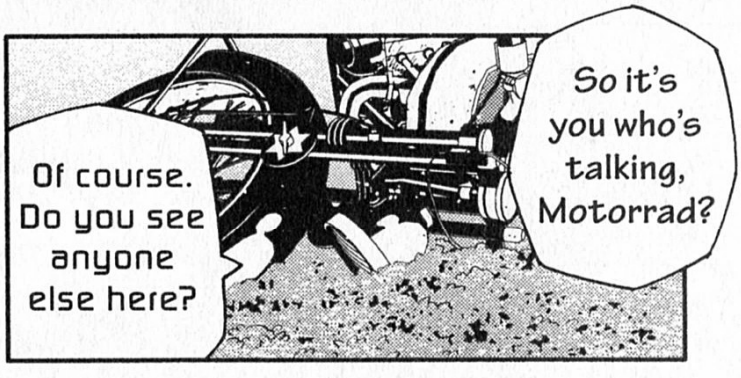

VRR
VRR
VRR
VRR
VRR
VRR
VRR
...
Hey.
Don't you think this is far enough?
Ah
BRRT
BRRT
BRRT
BRRT
BRRT
BRRT
BRRT
BRRT
KREAK
Huh ?
Whoa !
GASHANG

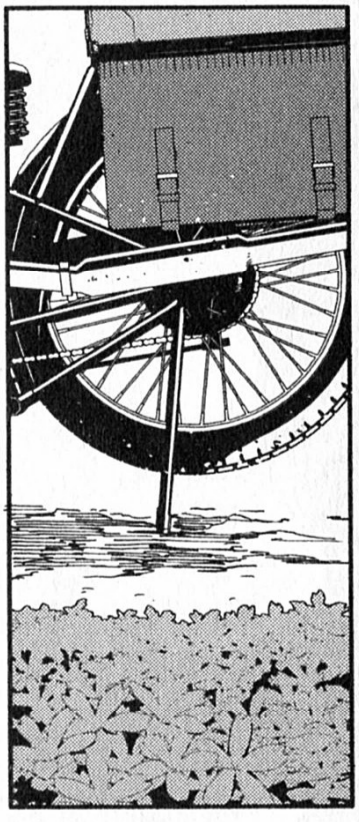

Kino
...
...

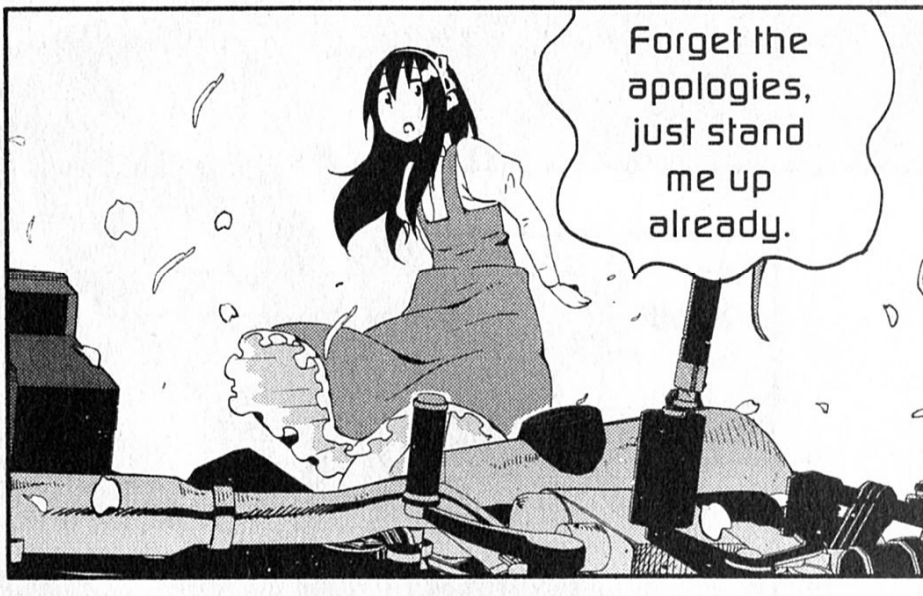

Who are you, anyway, who's being so rough?
Well, that was rough.


Aah.
Ahem!
Would you mind standing me up now, if you please?


BRUSH
BRUSH
Right.
I'm sorry.

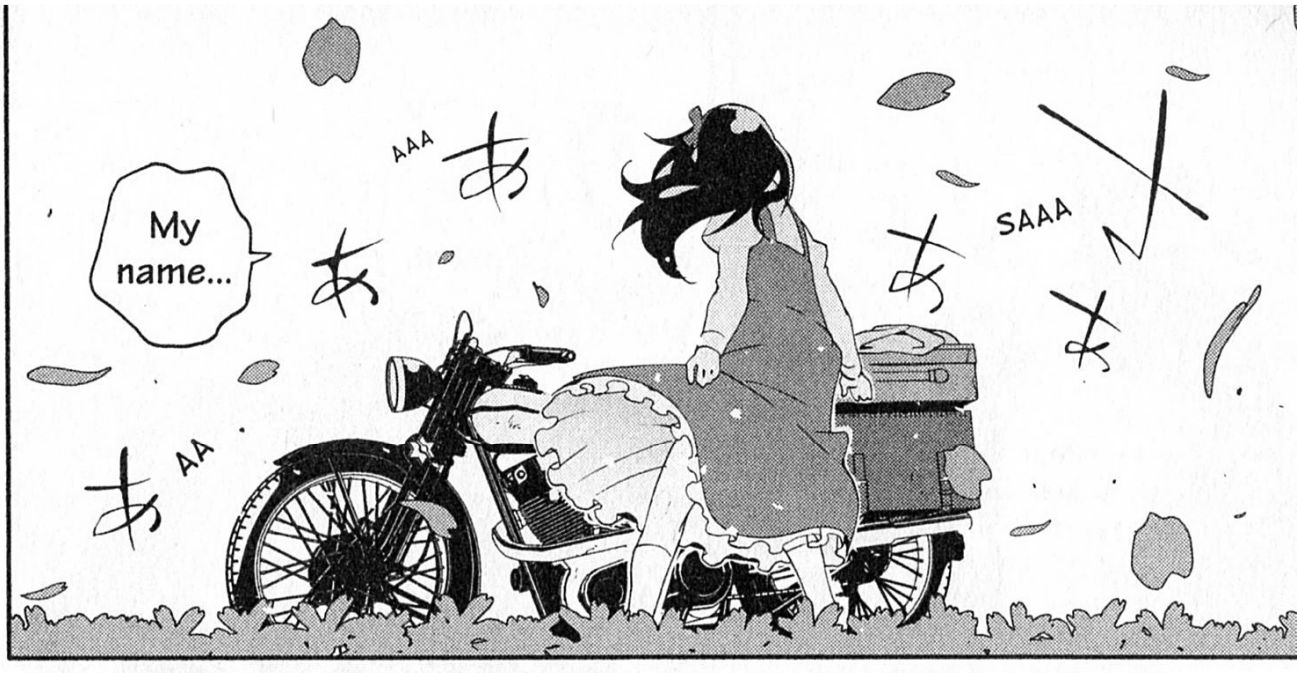

So it's you who's talking, Motorrad?
Of course. Do you see anyone else here?




Forget the apologies, just stand me up already.

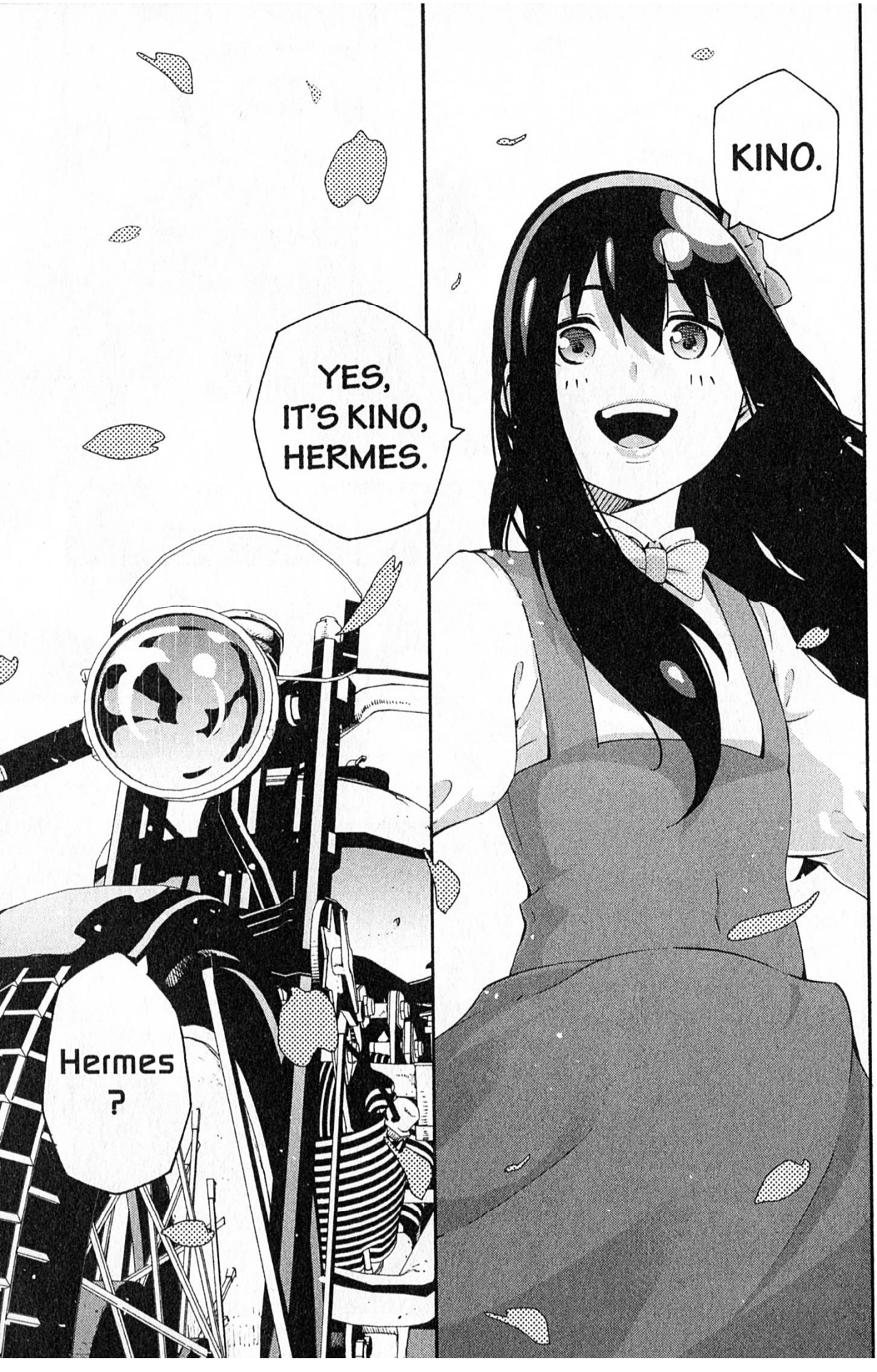

hee hee

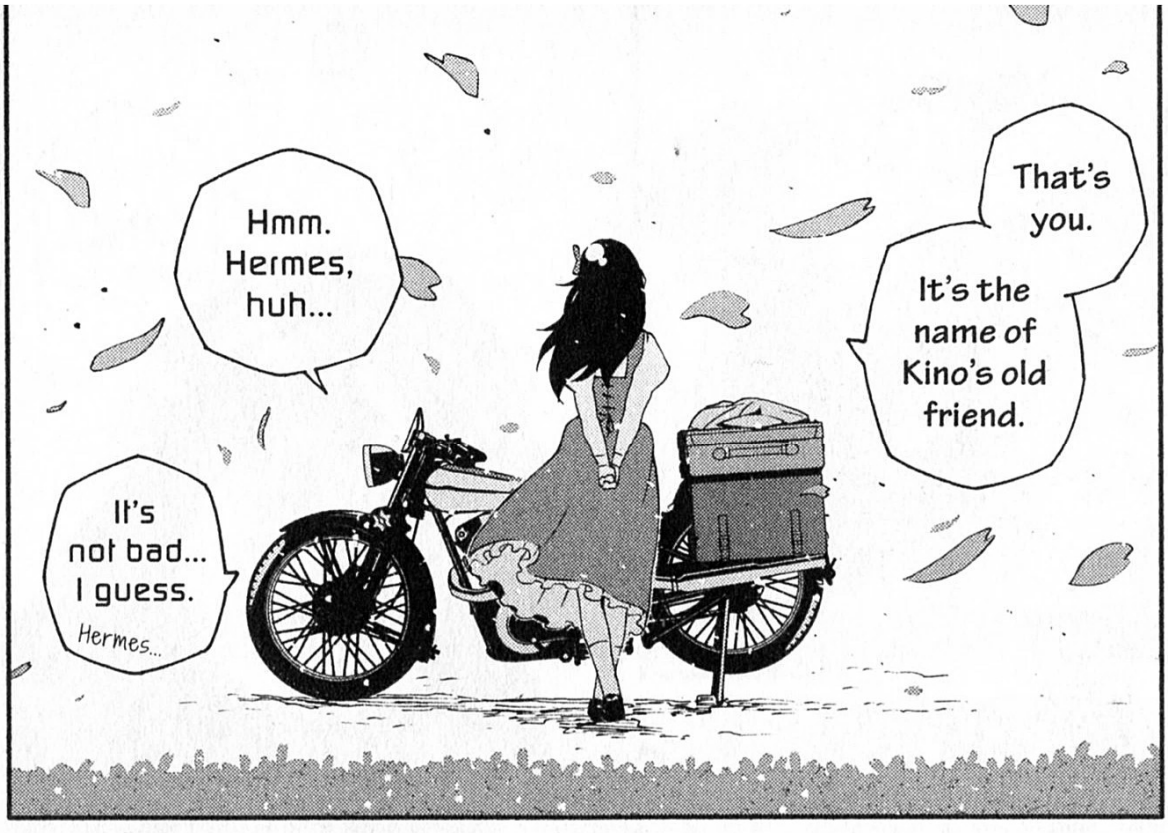

I'm lucky you rode me out, Kino.
I guess we made a contract to help each other.
...
Thank you for saving me.
Hey, it was mutual.
Who knows what would've happened to me if I'd been left there.
Hm?
Kino.
Wait, what did you just call me?
That's what you said when I asked your name before.
Right?
My...

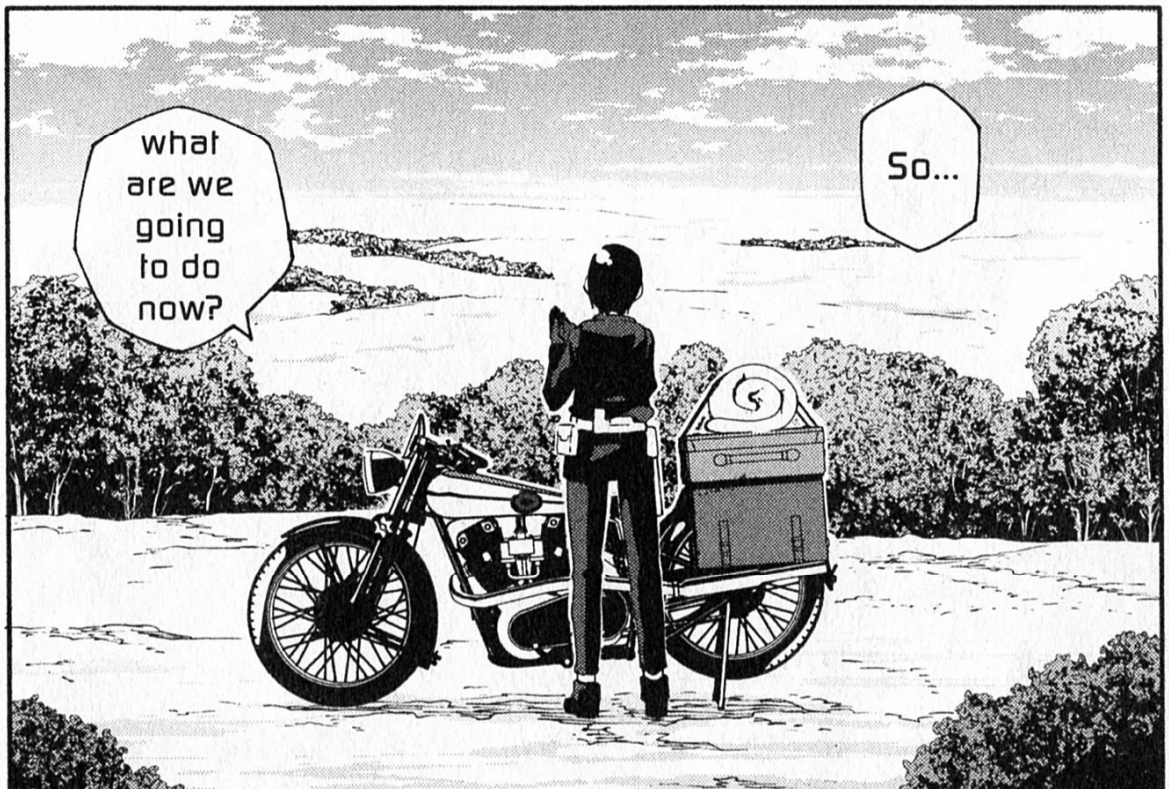

My name...
AAA
SAAA
AA




My name is...


KINO.
YES, IT'S KINO, HERMES.
Hermes ?

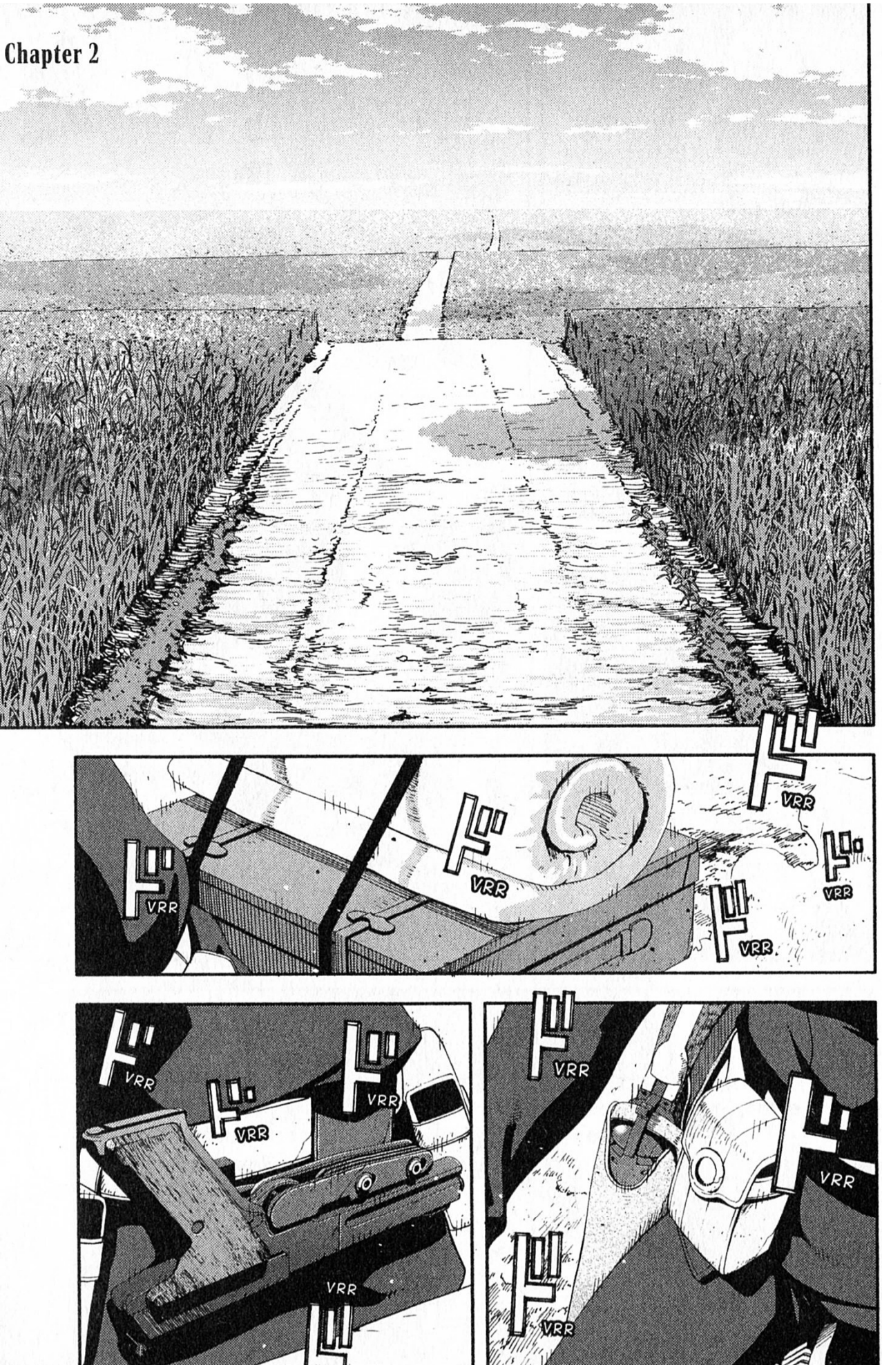

Hmm. Hermes, huh...
That's you.
It's the name of Kino's old friend.
It's not bad... I guess.
Hermes...


what are we going to do now?
So...

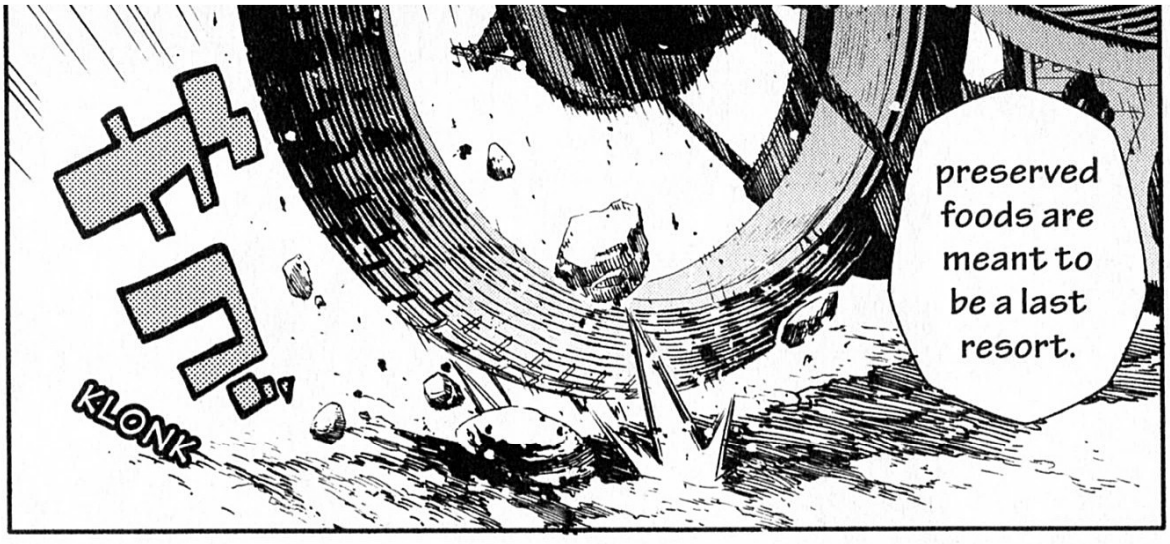

Kino.
GACHUNK
Same as always, Hermes.
DWRR
GAKINK

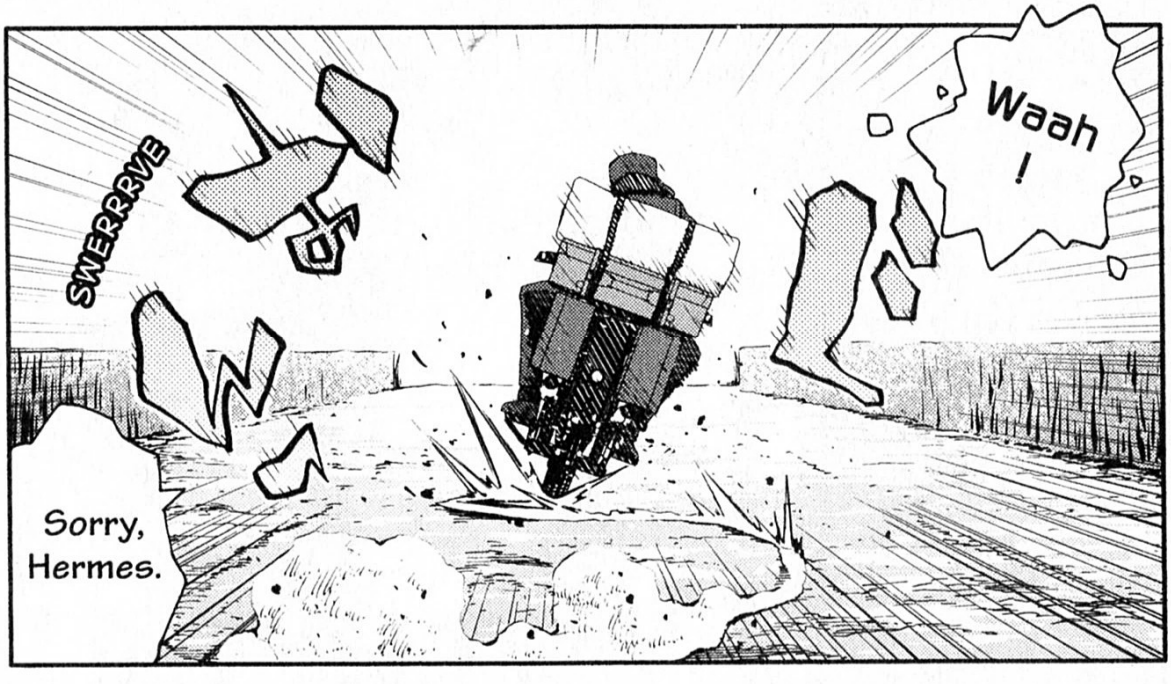

Let's go on a journey.

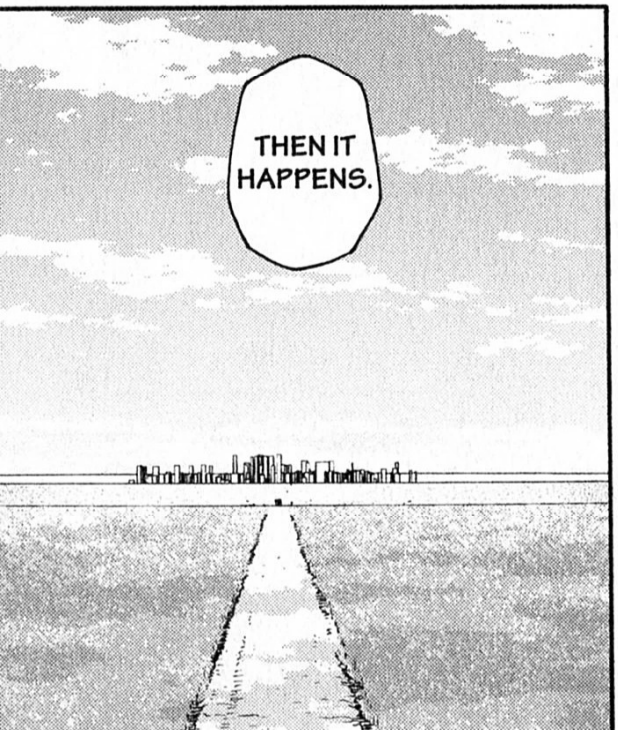
Chapter 2

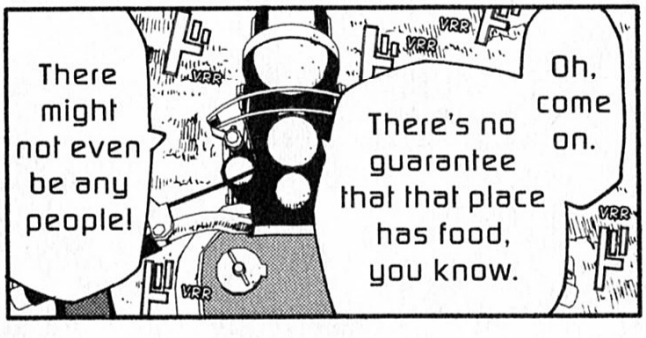

ドド
VRR
ドド
VRR
ドド
VRR
ドド
VRR
ドド
VRR
ドド
VRR
ドド
VRR
ドド
VRR
ドド
VRR
ドド
VRR


Honestly, Kino, I have no idea what goes on in that head of yours.
If you have food, why not eat it?
...
ドゥ VRR
ドゥ VRR
ドゥ VRR
ドゥ VRR
ドゥ VRR
ドゥ VRR
ドゥ VRR
ドゥ VRR
ドゥ VRR
ドゥ VRR
ドゥ VRR
ドゥ VRR
ドゥ VRR
ドゥ VRR
ドゥ VRR
Be-sides,
I can't eat a snack when our next destination is in sight.

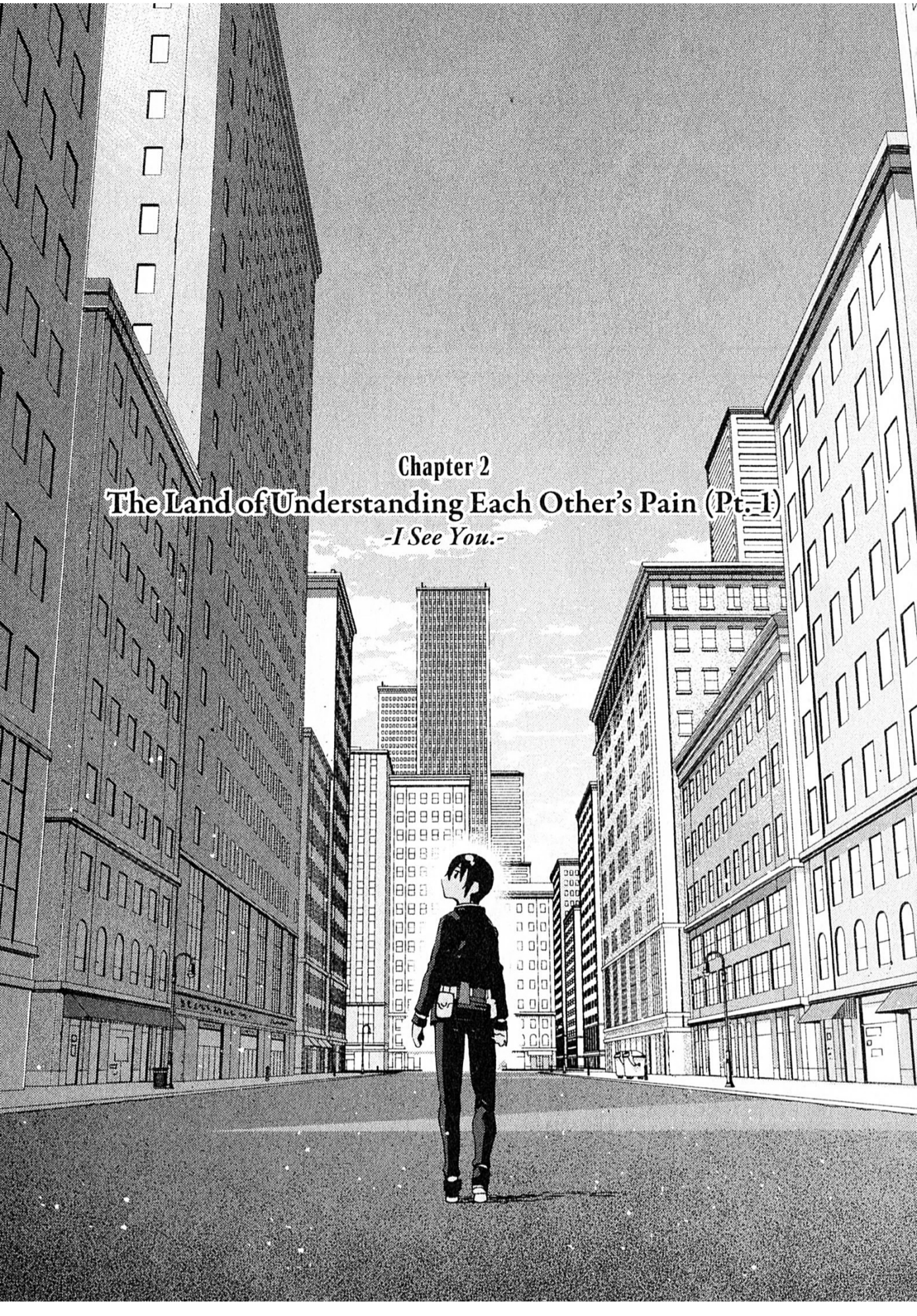

KLONK
preserved foods are meant to be a last resort.


SWERRRVE
Waah!
Sorry, Hermes.

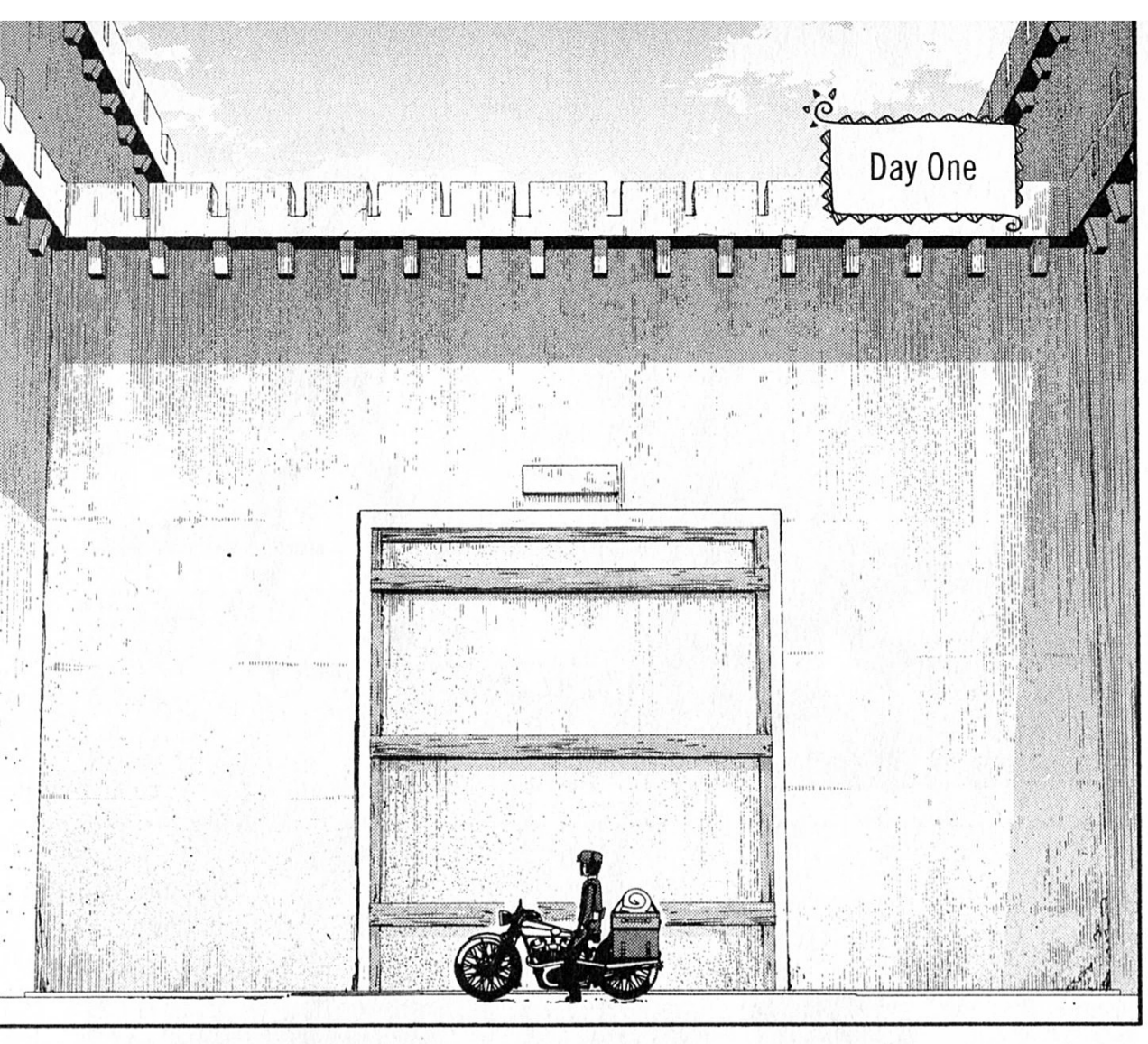

THEN IT HAPPENS.

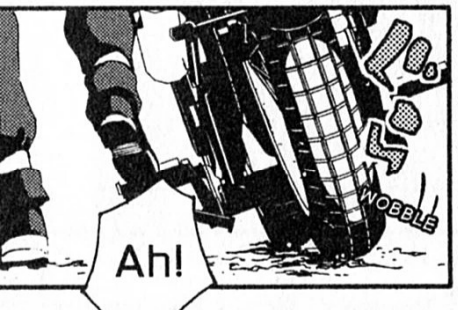

There might not even be any people!
There's no guarantee that that place has food, you know.
Oh, come on.
VRR


If that happens?
That's true. Well, if that happens...
VRR

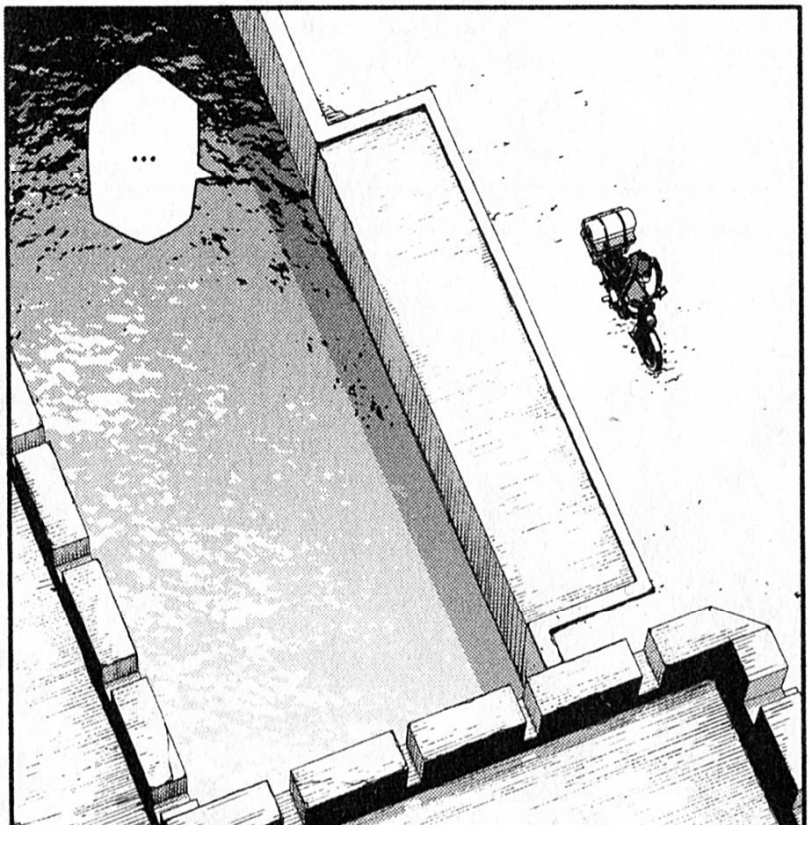


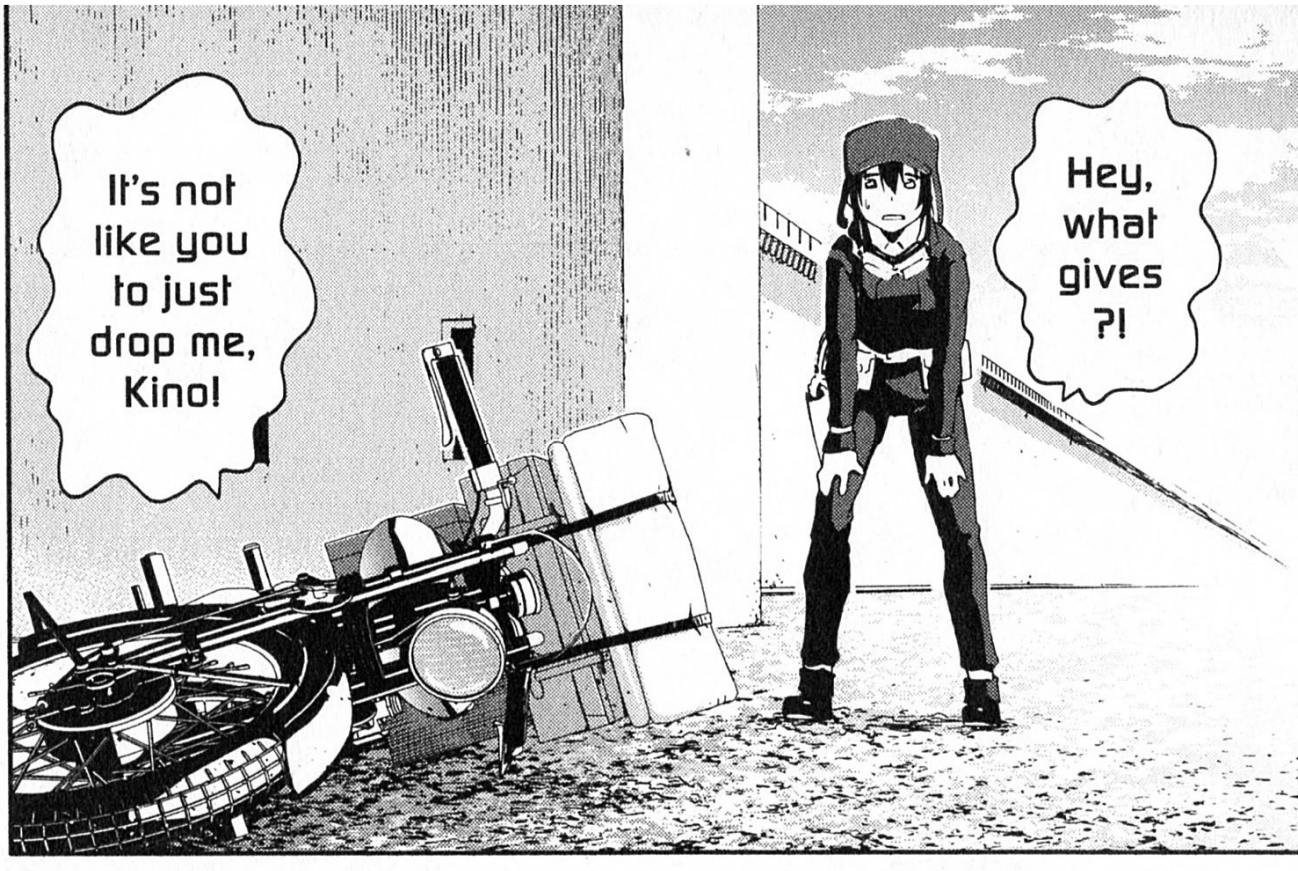
Chapter 2
The Land of Understanding Each Other's Pain (Pt. 1)
-I See You.-

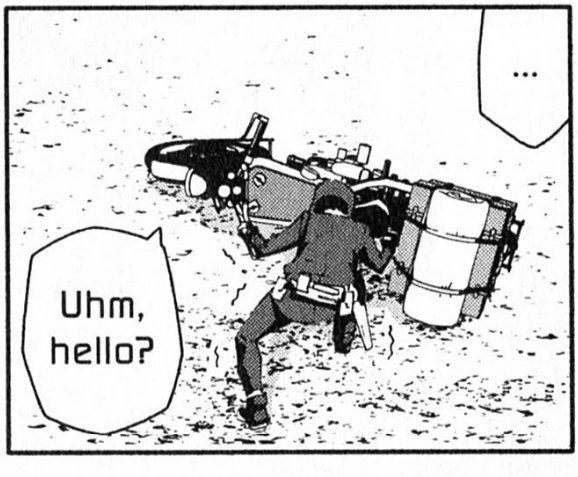

Day One

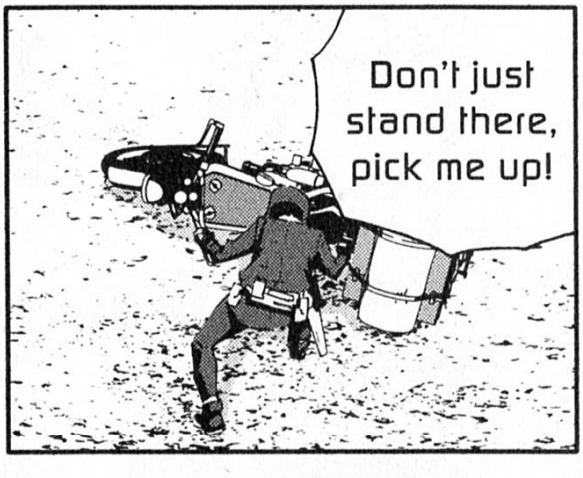

WOBBLE


Ah!
GASHANG

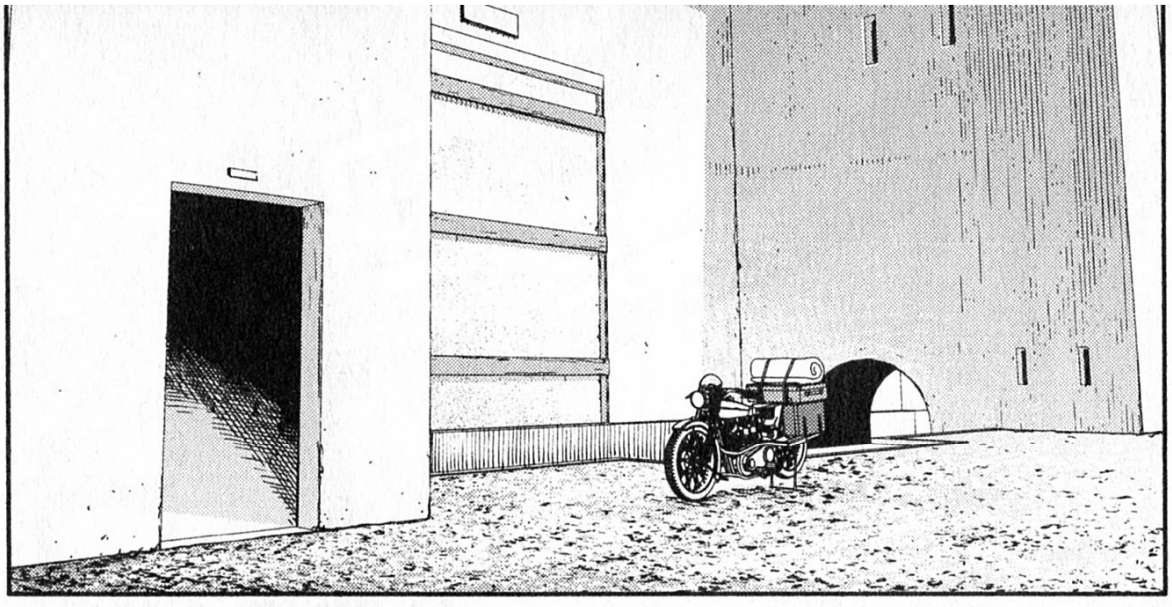

...


It's not like you to just drop me, Kino!
Hey, what gives ?!

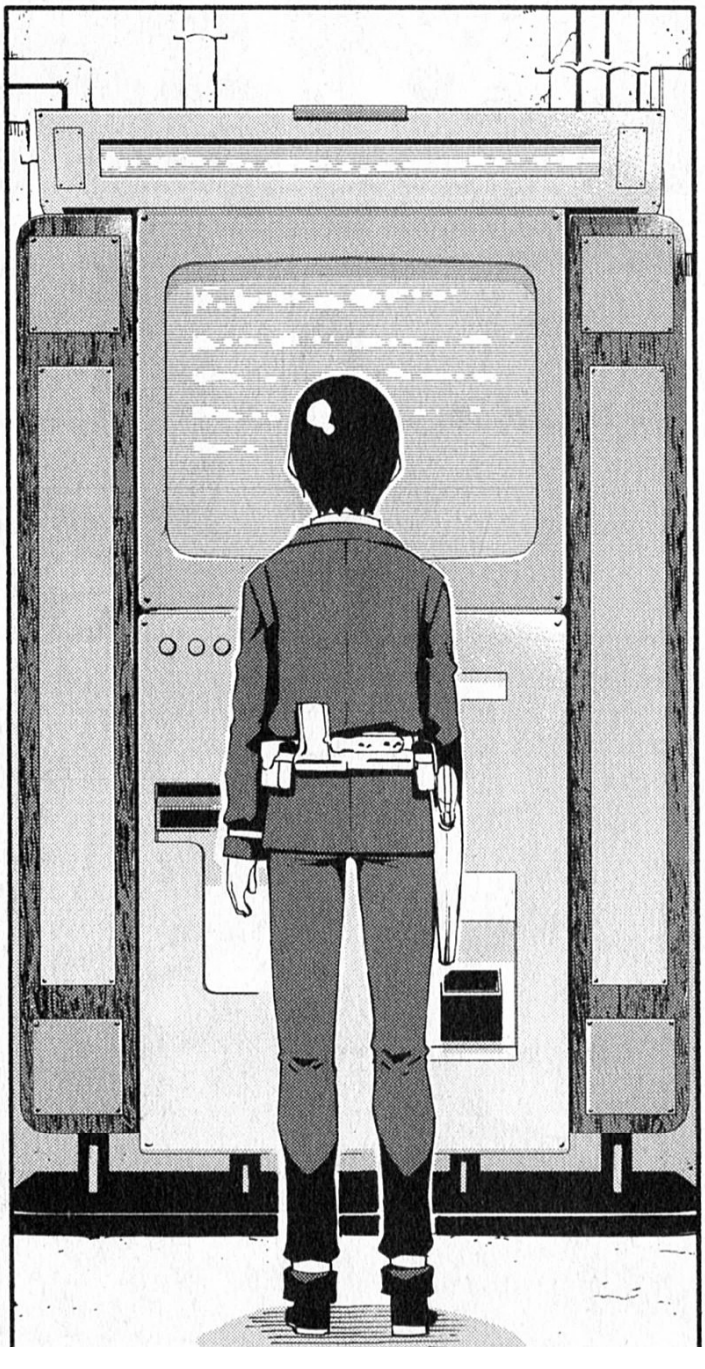

...
Uhm, hello?

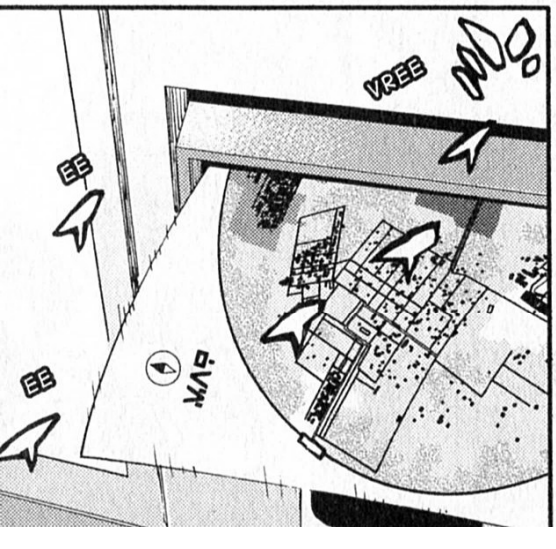

Don't just stand there, pick me up!

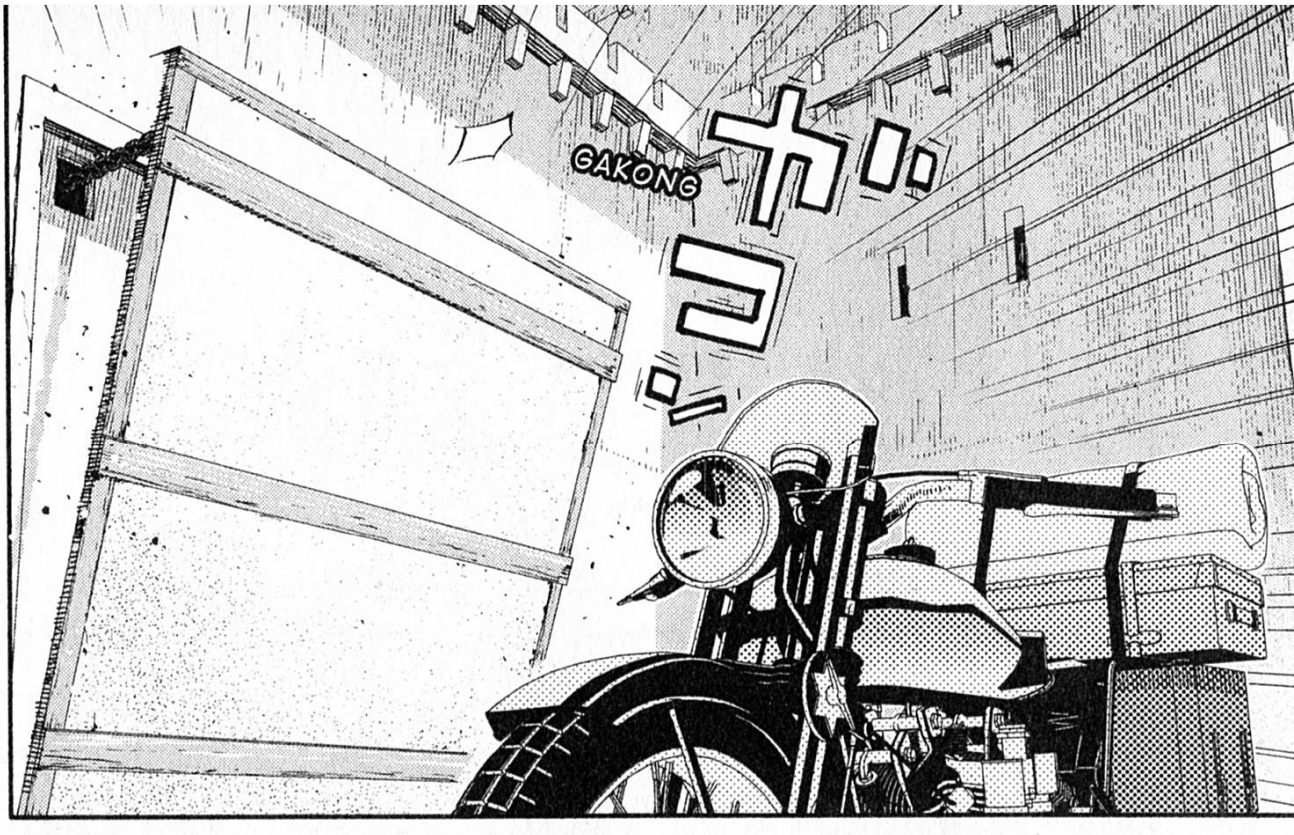

...
Too hungry... no strength left...

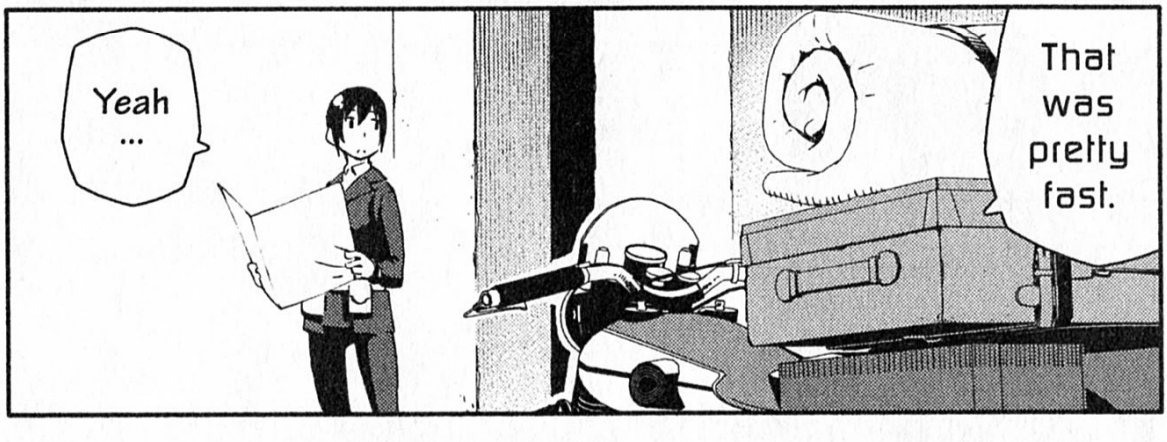


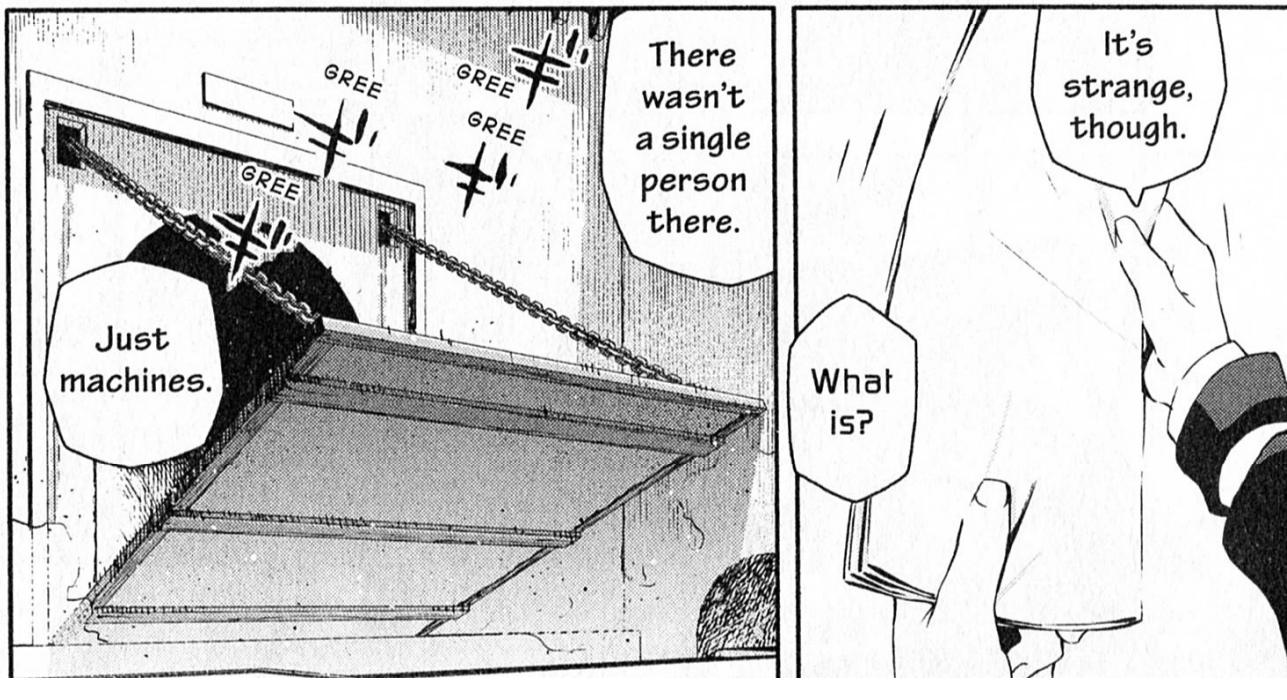




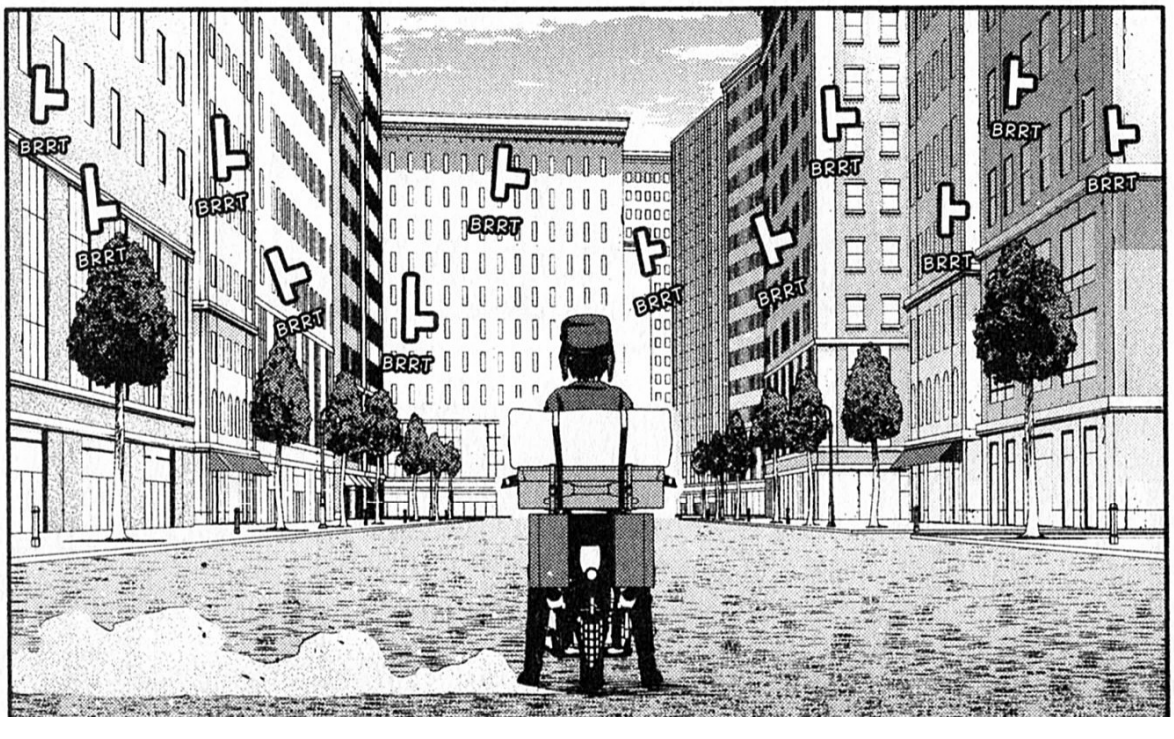

VREE
EE
EE
DVK


GAKONG
ガコン

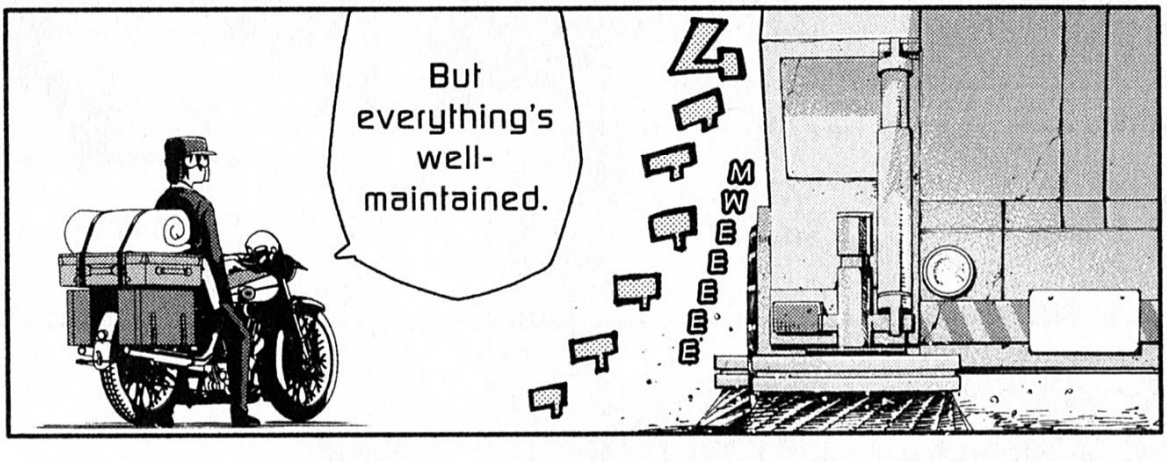

That was pretty fast.
Yeah ...

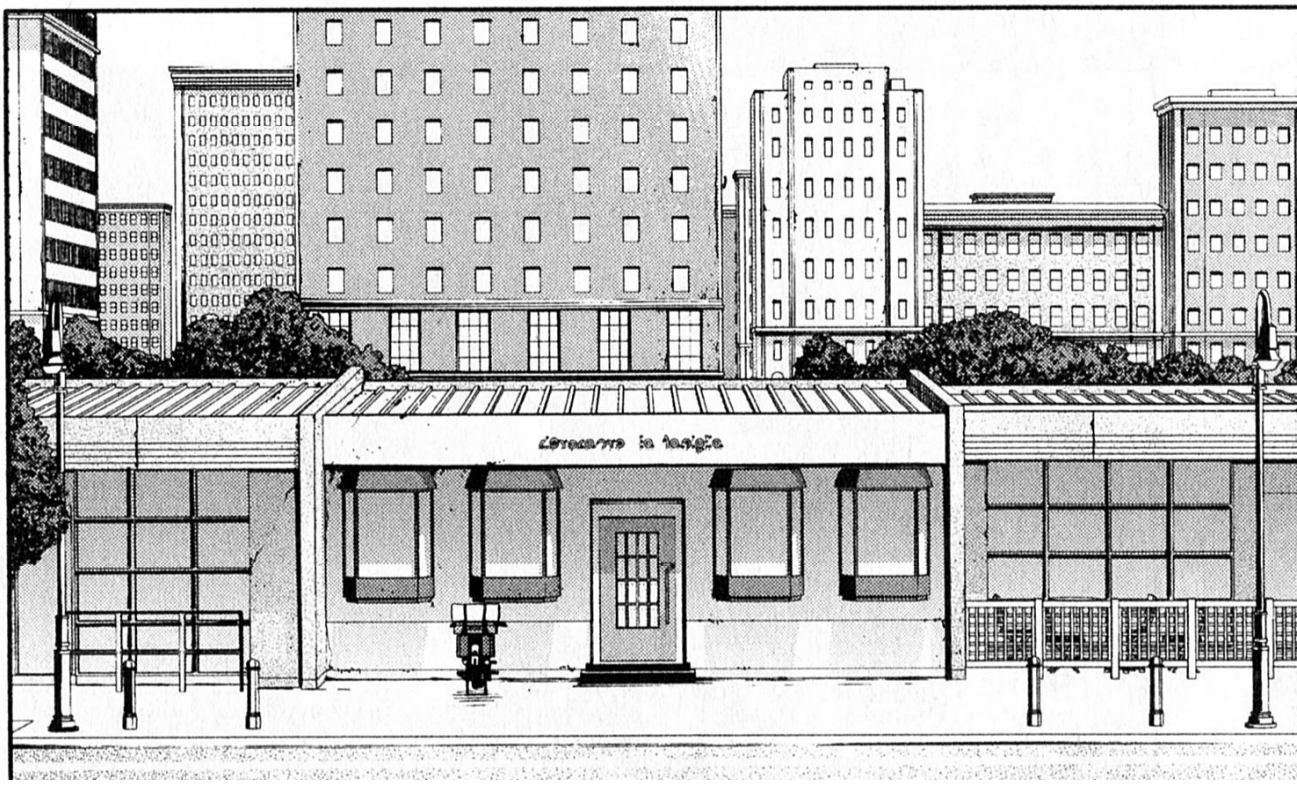

It's strange, though.
What is?
There wasn't a single person there.
GREE
GREE
GREE
GREE
Just machines.


What if we enter and still don't see anyone ...?
Yeah, right.
©Keiichi Sigsawa


BRRT


There's no one here.


But everything's well-maintained.
MWEEEEEE

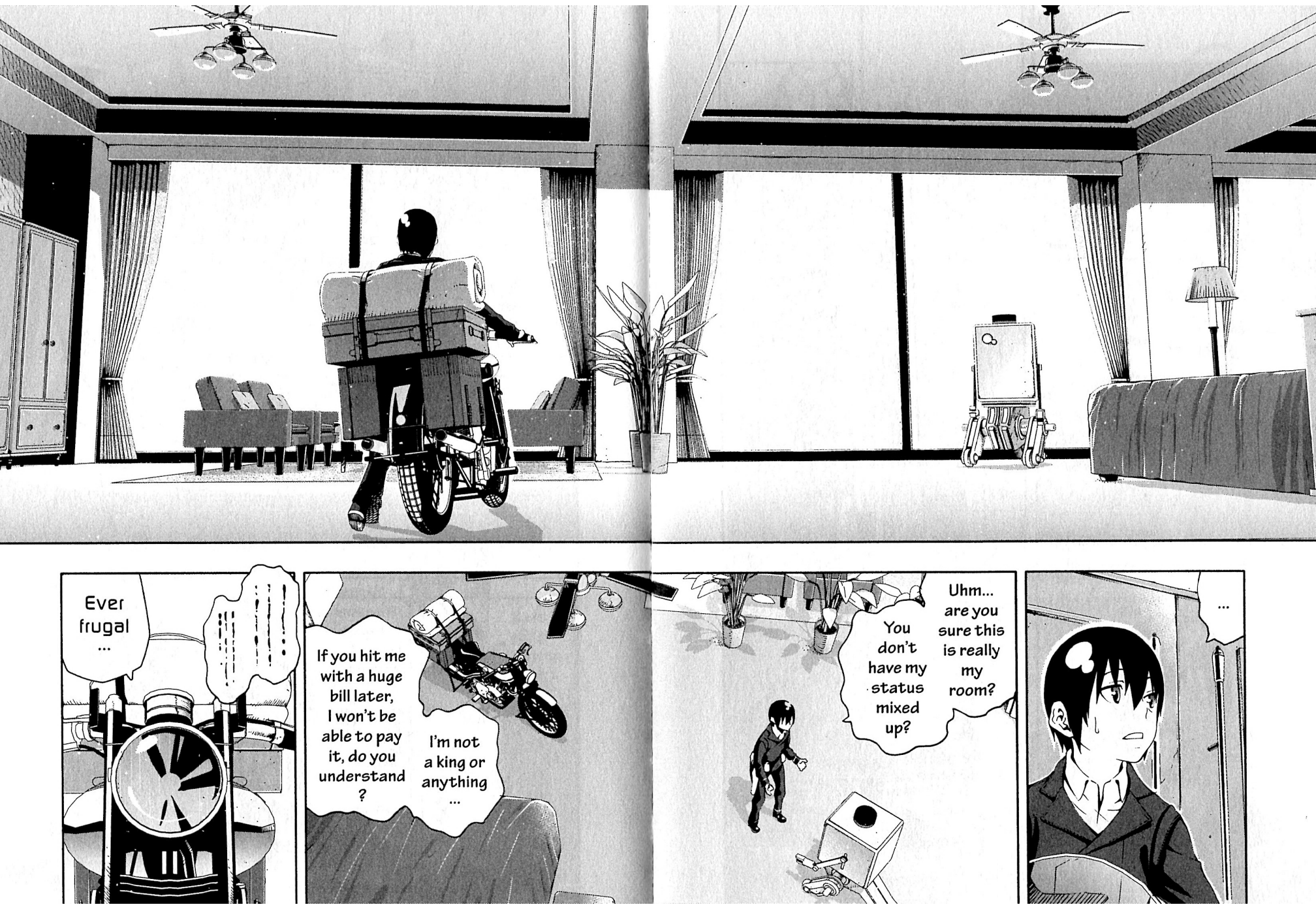


JINGLE
チリン
JANGLE
チリン

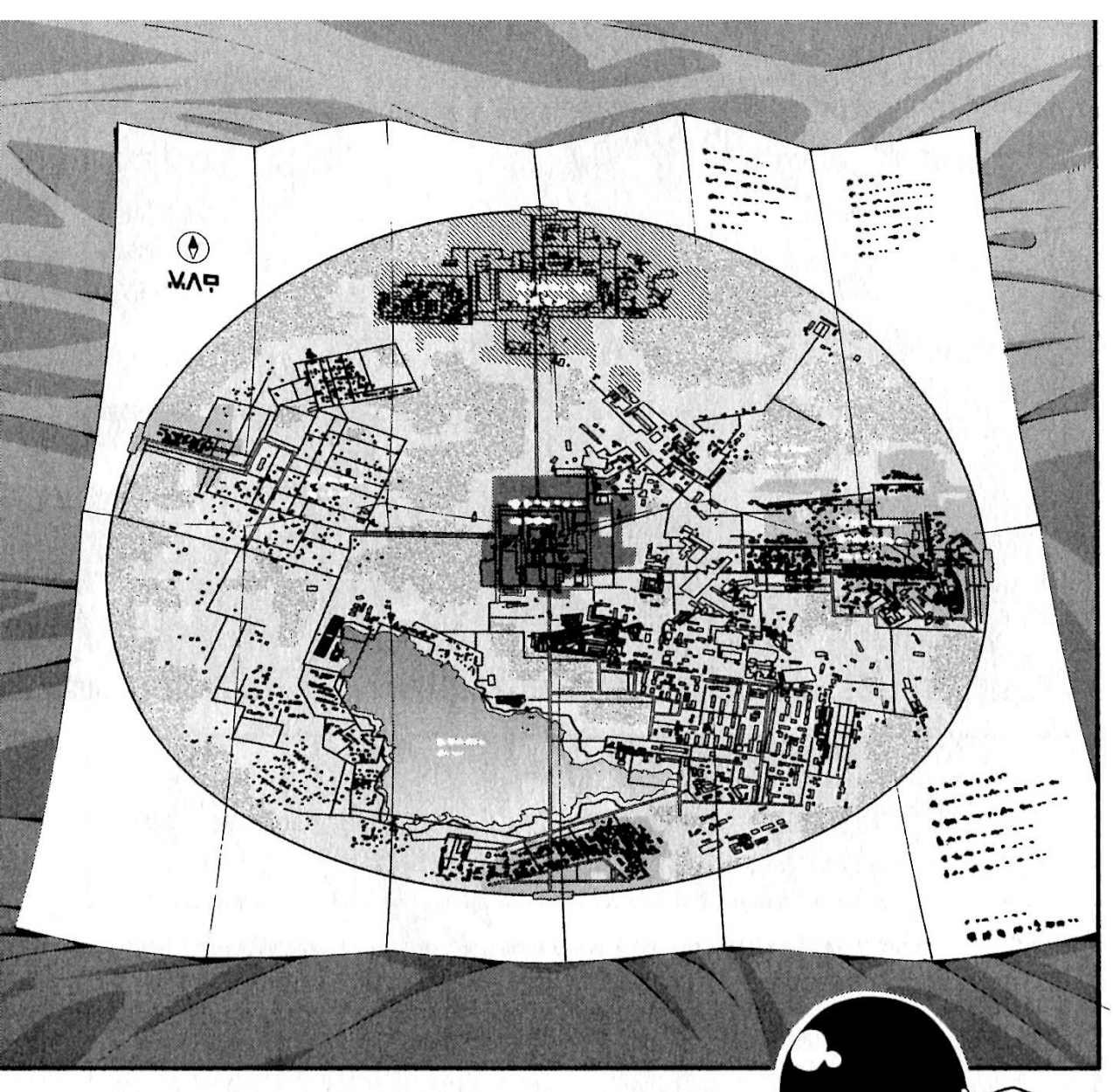
Did you eat?
I did.
See anyone?
Not a soul.
So then, who made your food?


...
The machines did all of it.
How'd it taste?
It was good.
And the price?
Absurdly cheap.
This place is weird.


TELOS Co., Ltd.
TELOS Co., Ltd.
Whoa.

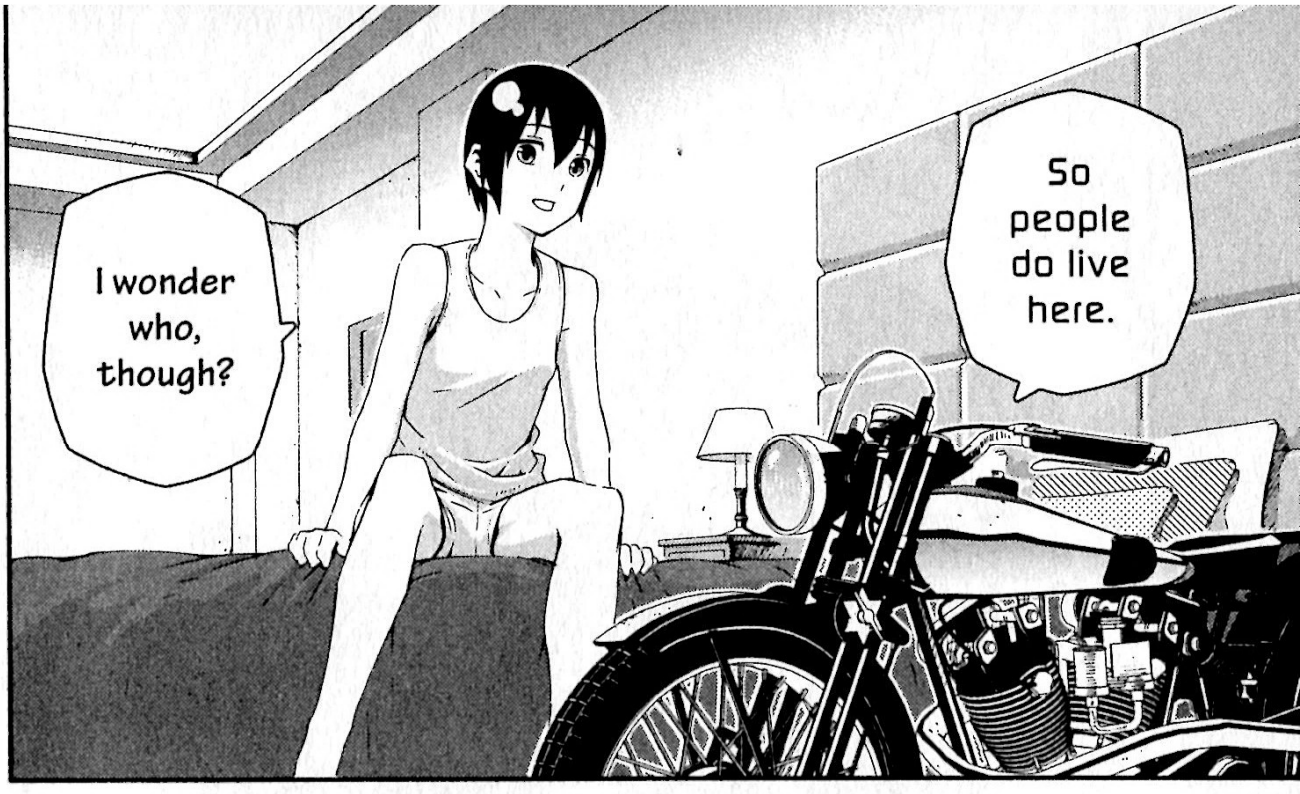

Ever frugal ...
If you hit me with a huge bill later, I won't be able to pay it, do you understand ?
I'm not a king or anything ...
You don't have my status mixed up?
Uhm... are you sure this is really my room?
...

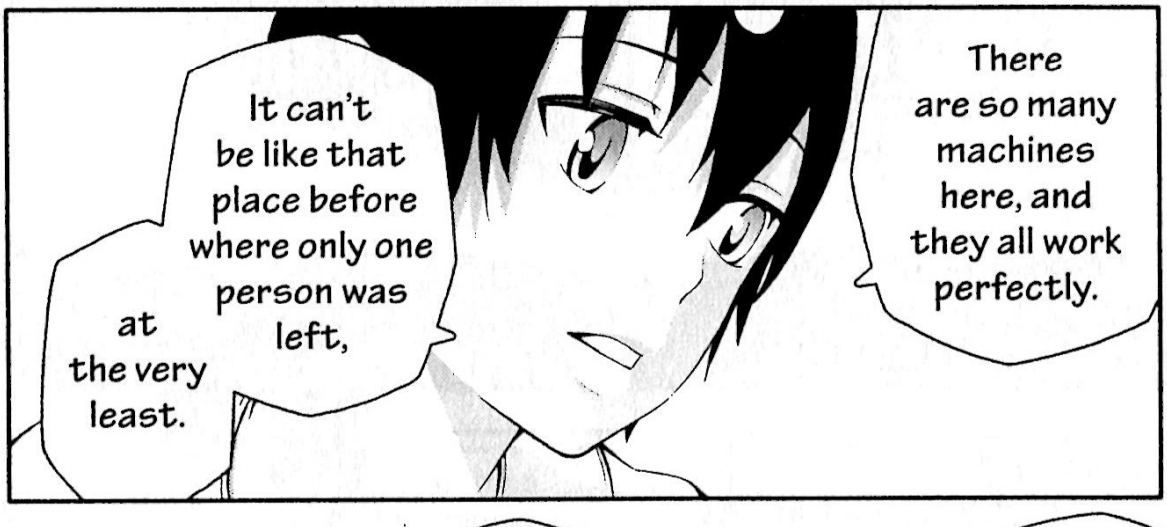

Okay, please take care of these.
mree
mre mreem
RUSTLE
They'll be ready tomorrow.
What'd it say?
Huh.


MAP

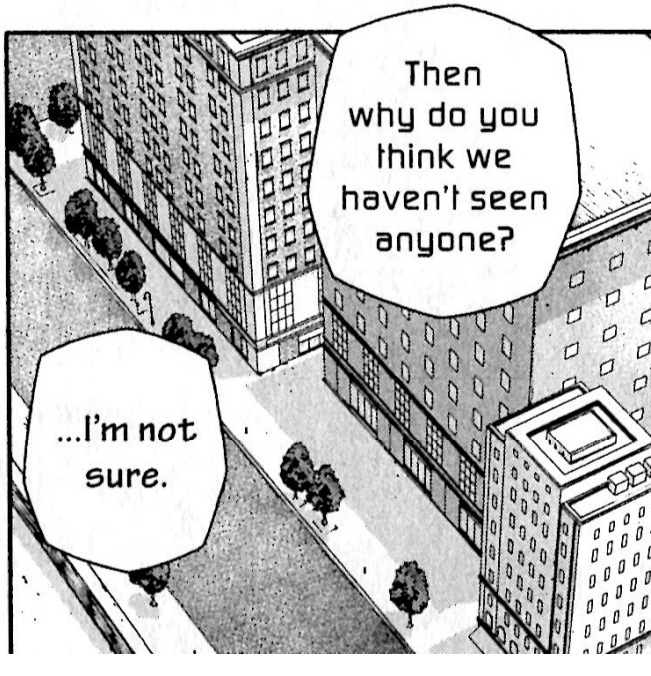

TAP
residential area.


East gate, shopping district,
central government area,
factory and laboratory area...

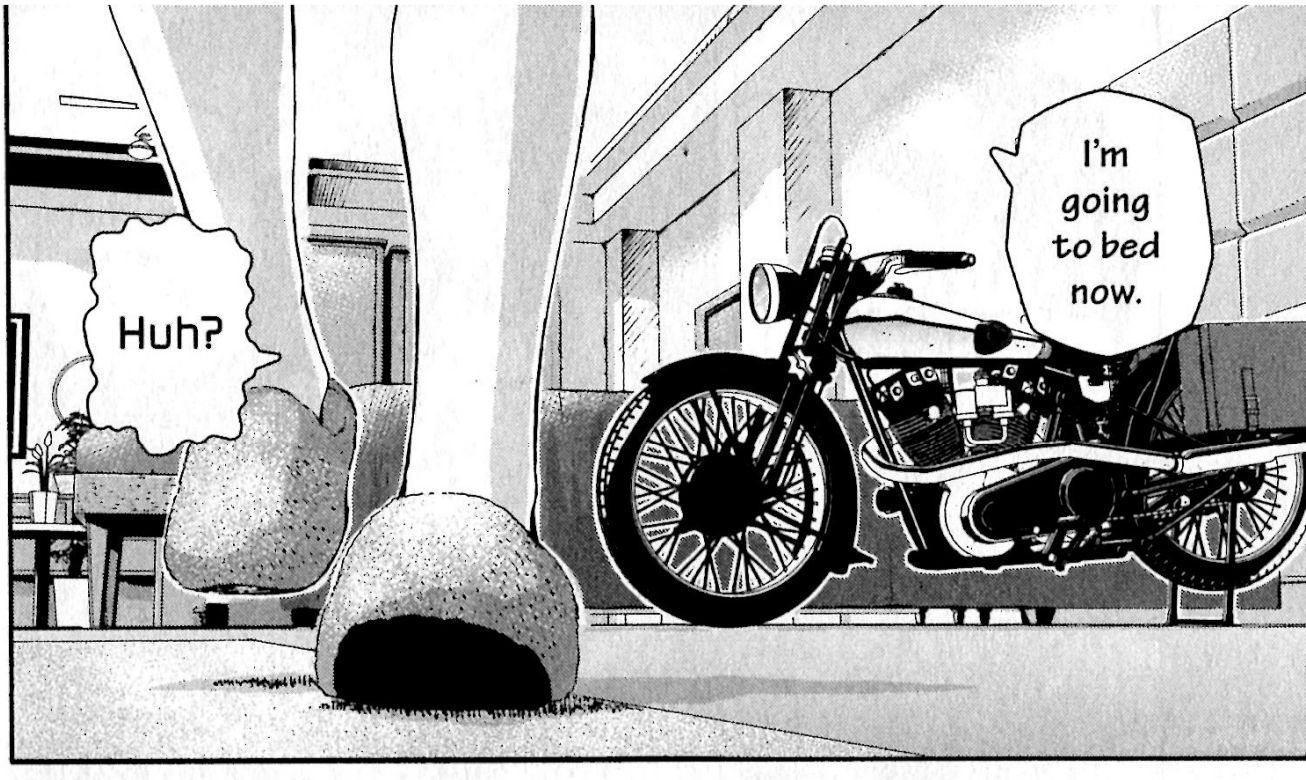

I wonder who, though?
So people do live here.

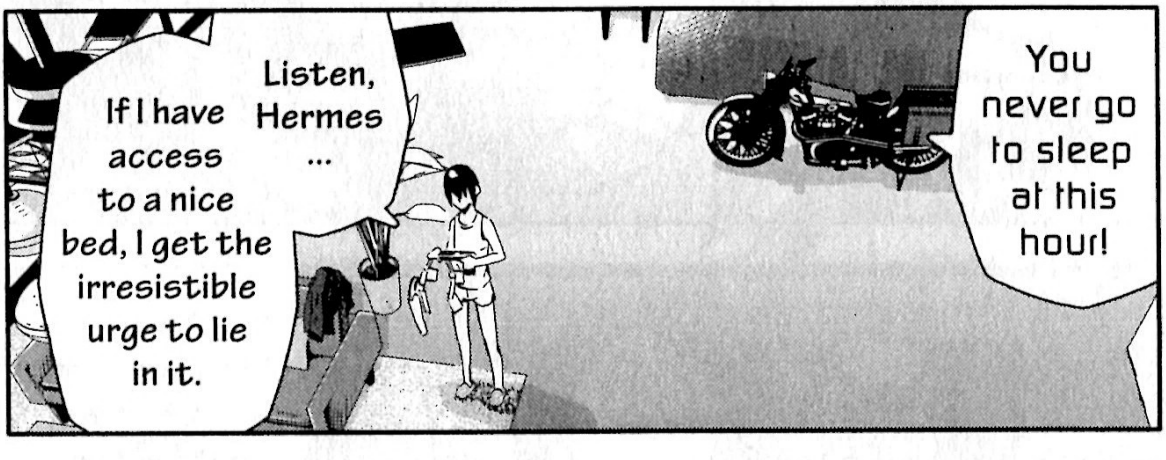

There are so many machines here, and they all work perfectly.
It can't be like that place before where only one person was left, at the very least.

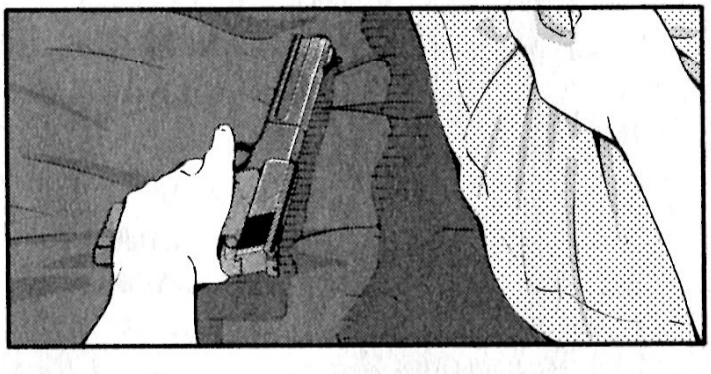

or maybe it's just that no one lives in this particular area.
Maybe it's for religious reasons, or it's naptime, or their day off...


Then why do you think we haven't seen anyone?
...I'm not sure.


Nah.
I'm done for today.
So then, the residential area?
Proba-bly.
Let's go check it out!
Why's that?
If we leave now, we won't be back until after sunset.
I don't like to ride at night, even in cities.
Besides ...
Besides ?


Huh?
I'm going to bed now.

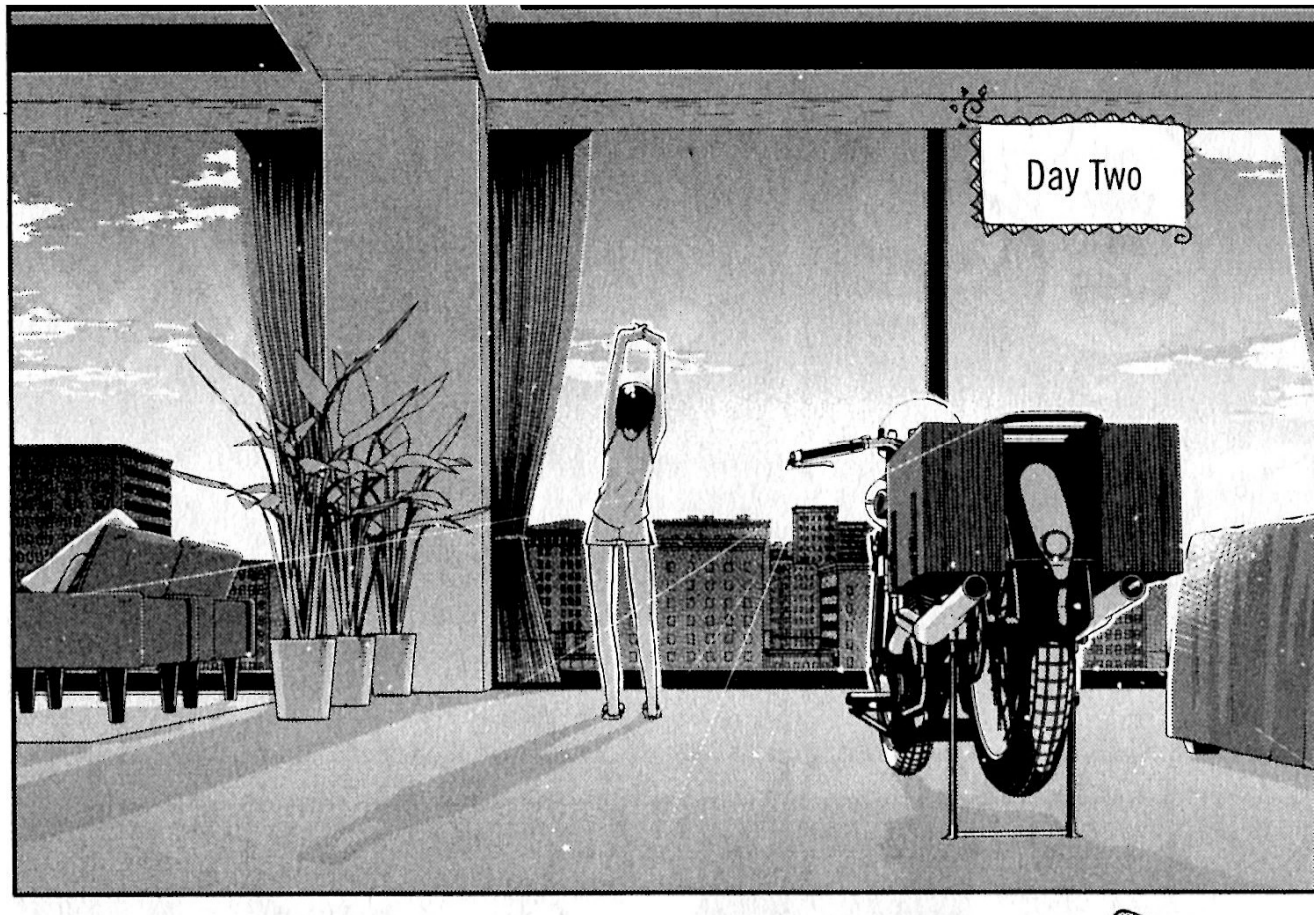

Listen, Hermes ...
If I have access to a nice bed, I get the irresistible urge to lie in it.
You never go to sleep at this hour!

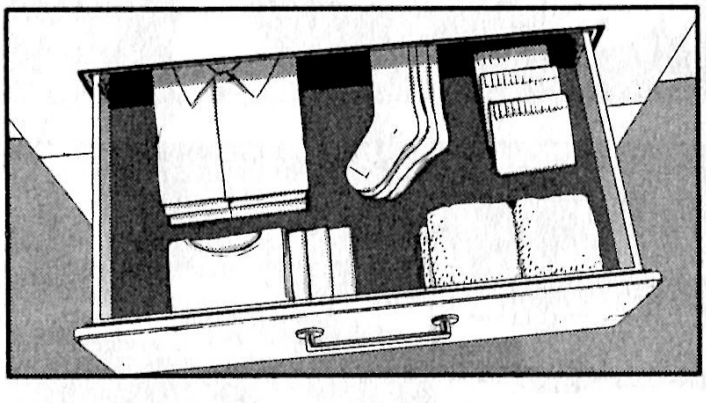



And I also get very sleepy.

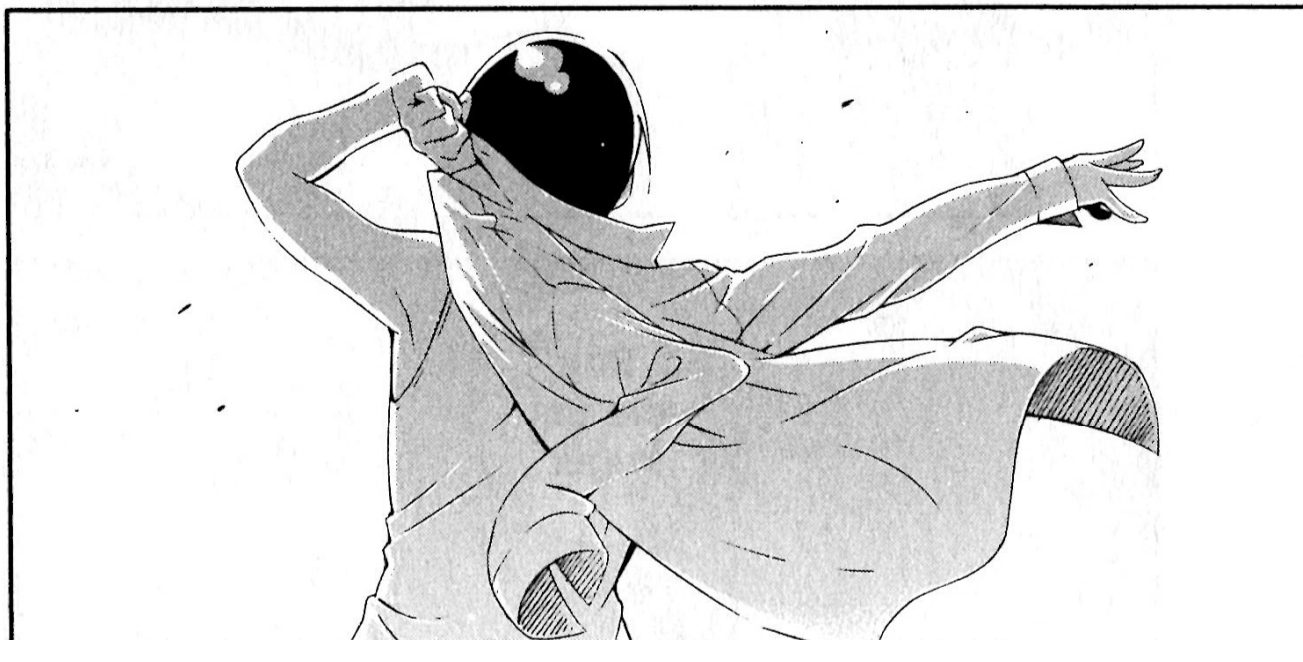

PAT
PAT


THIS IS BLISS ~
FLOP
KA
...
ZZZ
ZZZ
Boy, are you frugal...


Day Two

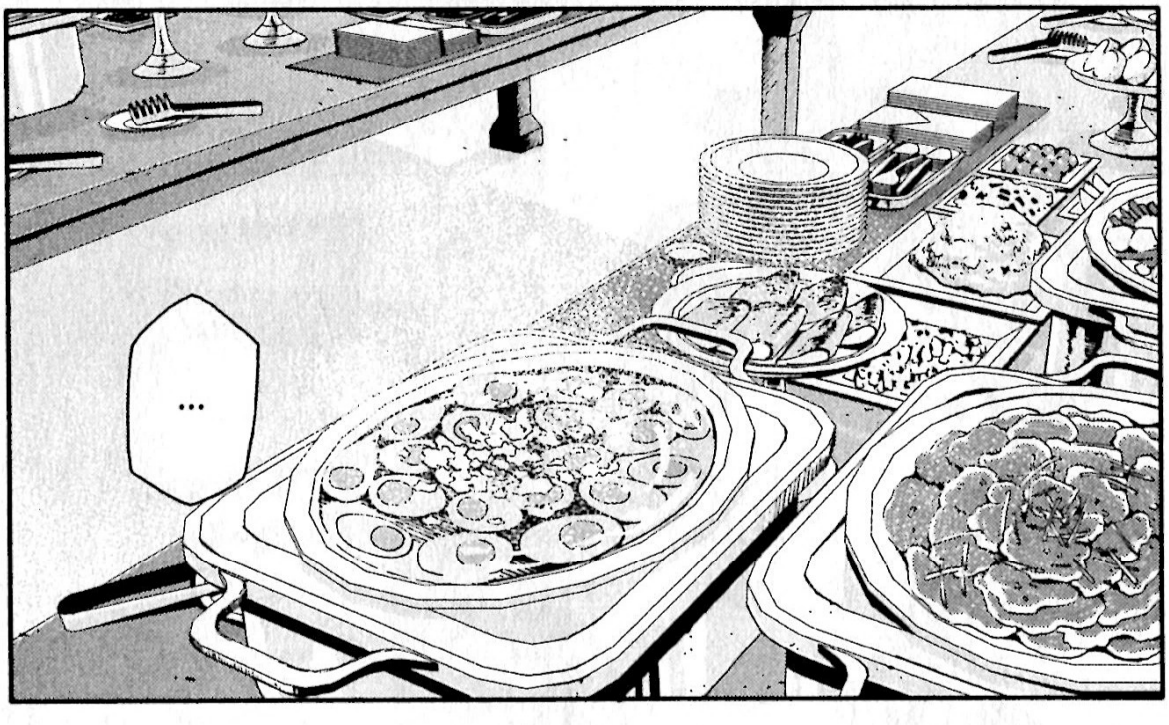


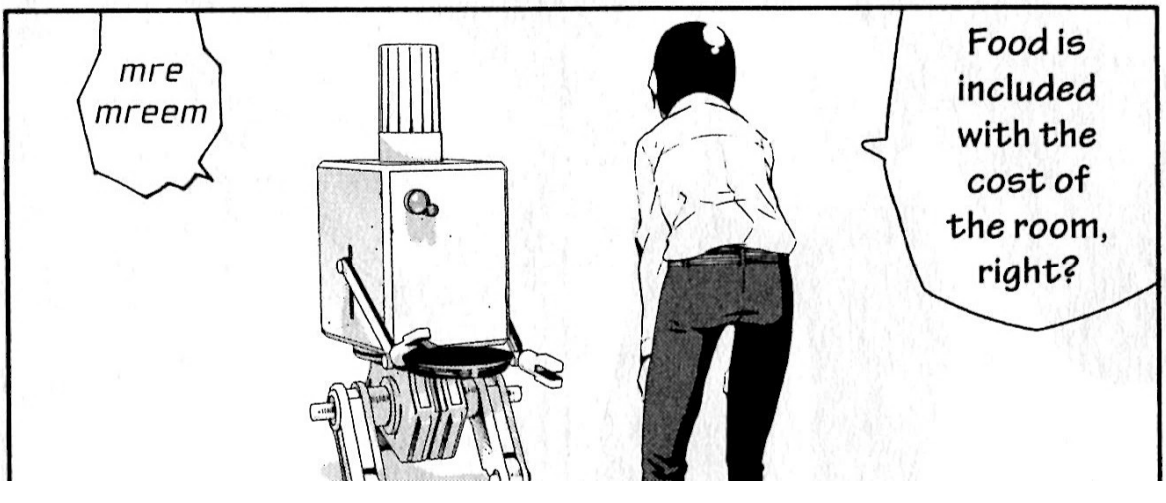

KTAK



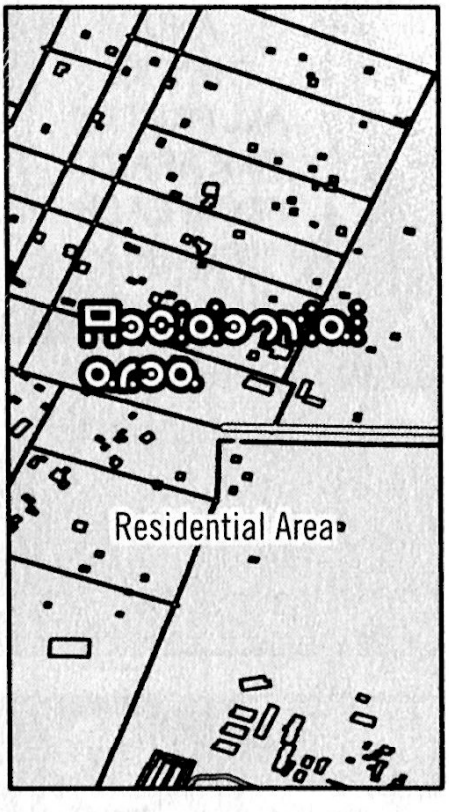

KLIK
KLIK
KLIK
SHAKK
PSHAP


I really am the only person here...


...

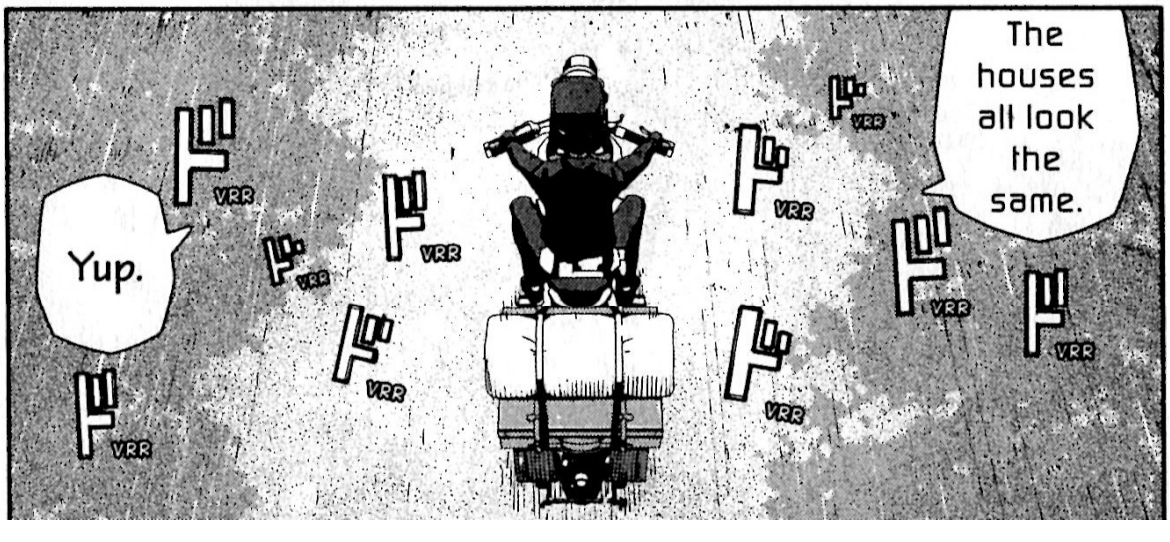

mre mreem
Food is included with the cost of the room, right?

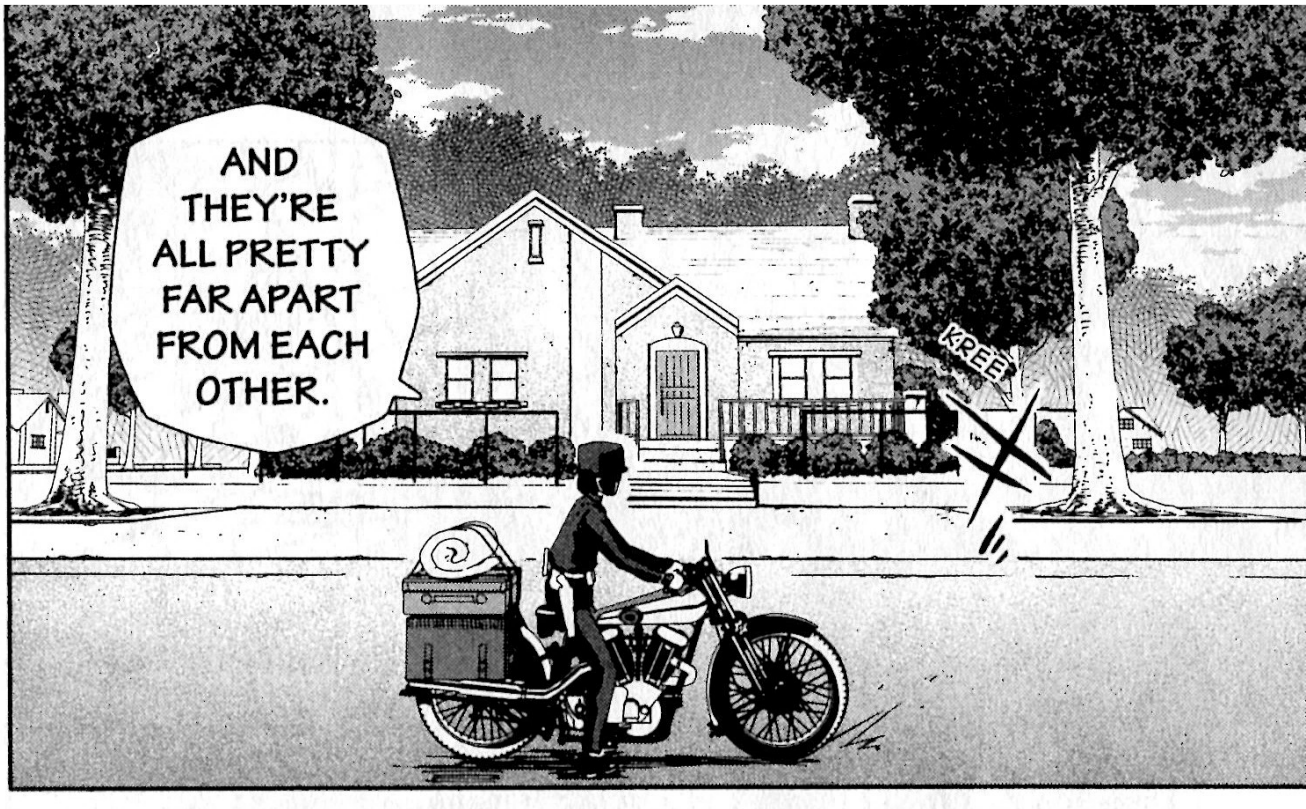

ドゥ VRR
ドゥ VRR
ドゥ VRR
ドゥ VRR
ドゥ VRR
ドゥ VRR


Residential Area

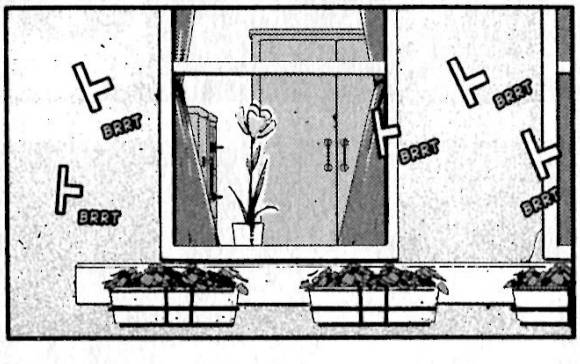





Yup.
The houses all look the same.
ドゥ VRR
ドゥ VRR
ドゥ VRR
ドゥ VRR
ドゥ VRR
ドゥ VRR
ドゥ VRR
ドゥ VRR
ドゥ VRR

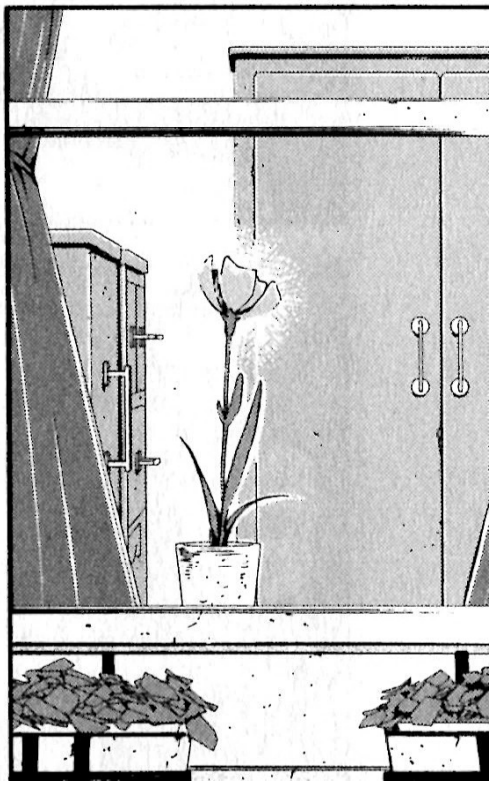

AND THEY'RE ALL PRETTY FAR APART FROM EACH OTHER.
KREEE

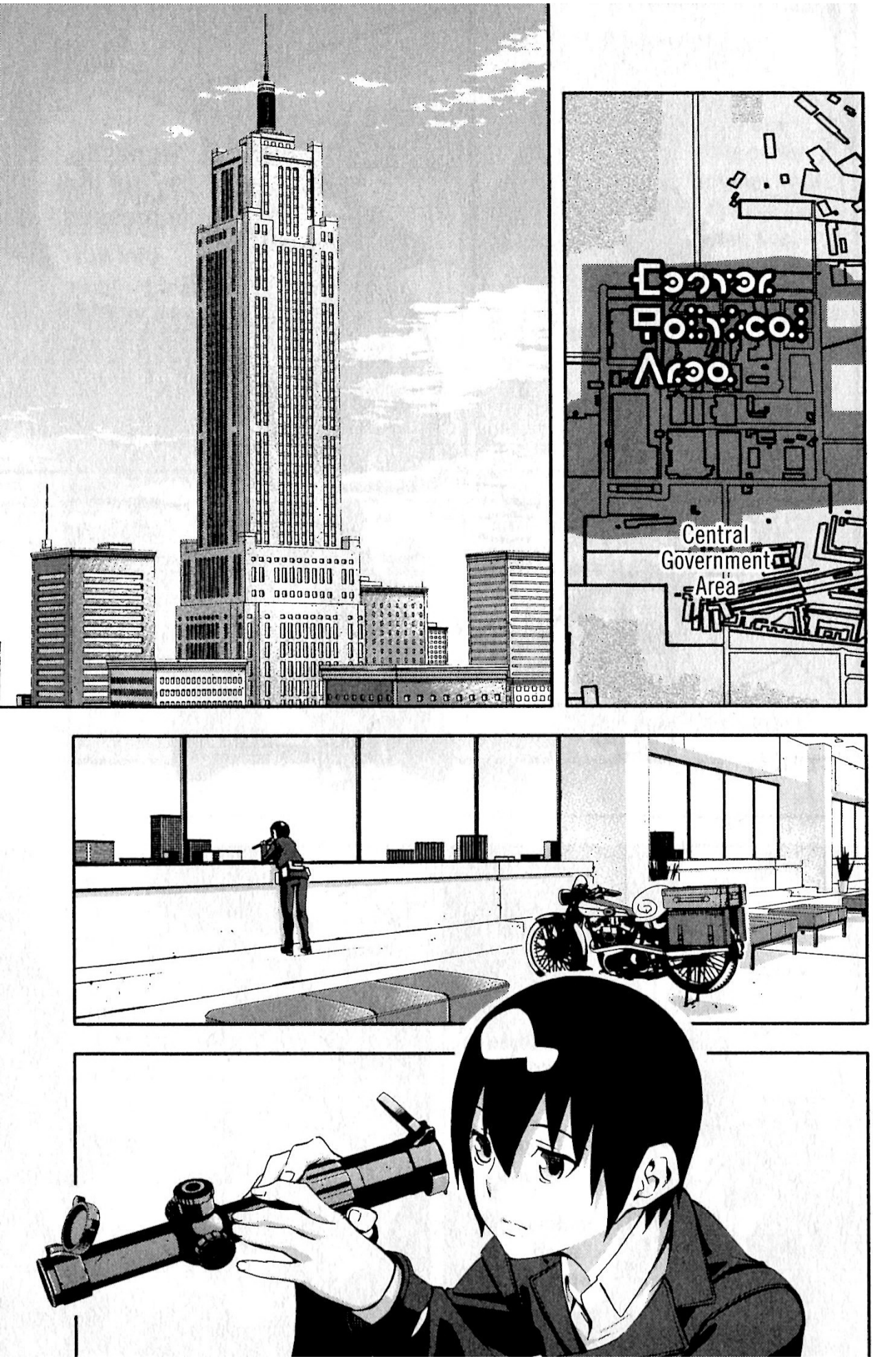

BRRT
BRRT
BRRT
BRRT

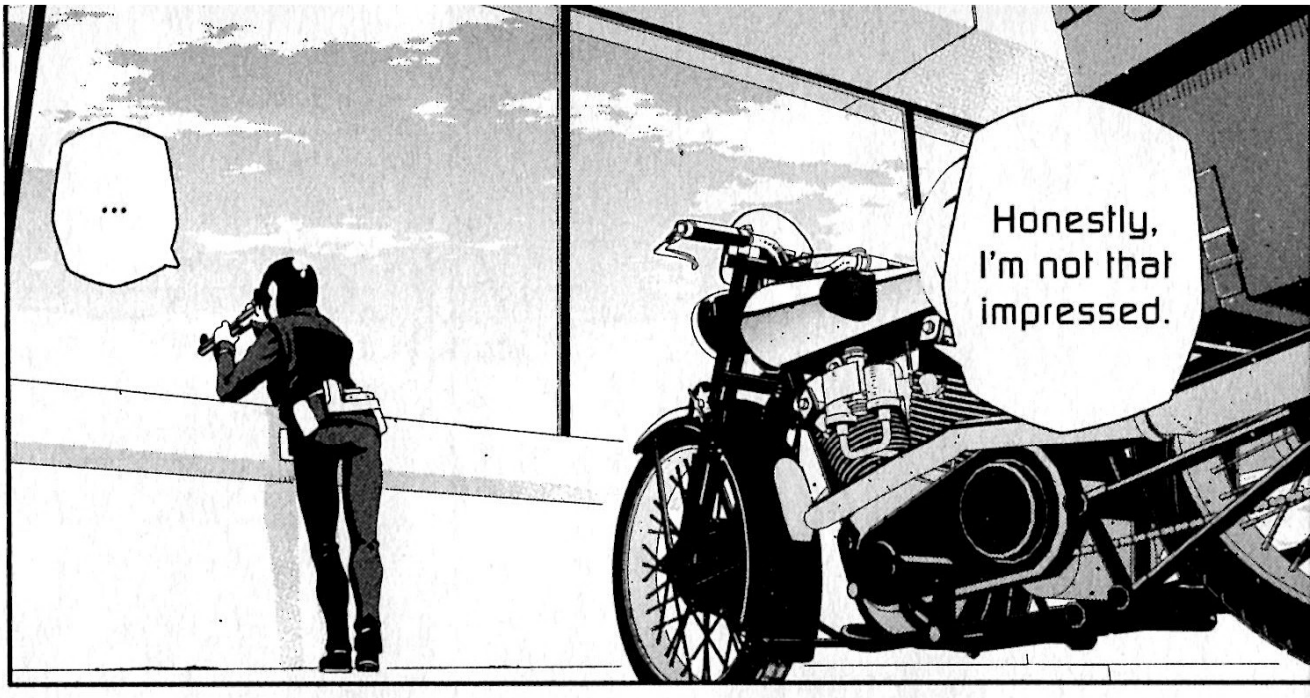

BRRT
BRRT
BRRT
BRRT

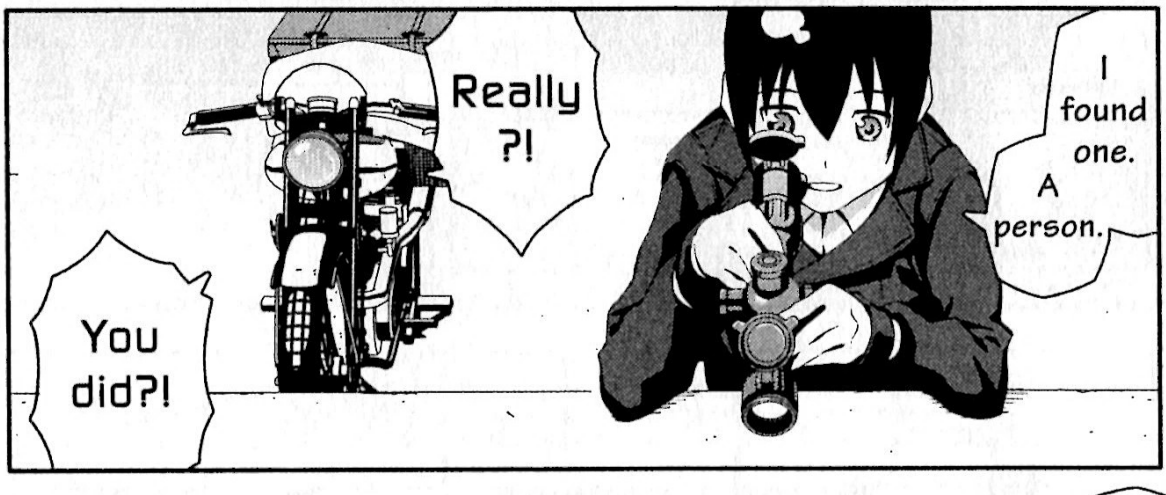

Let's go.

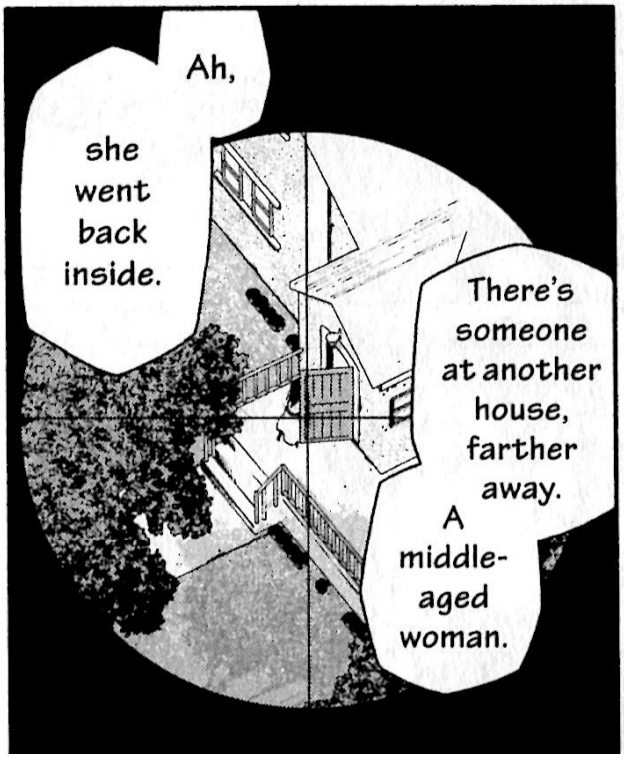

...

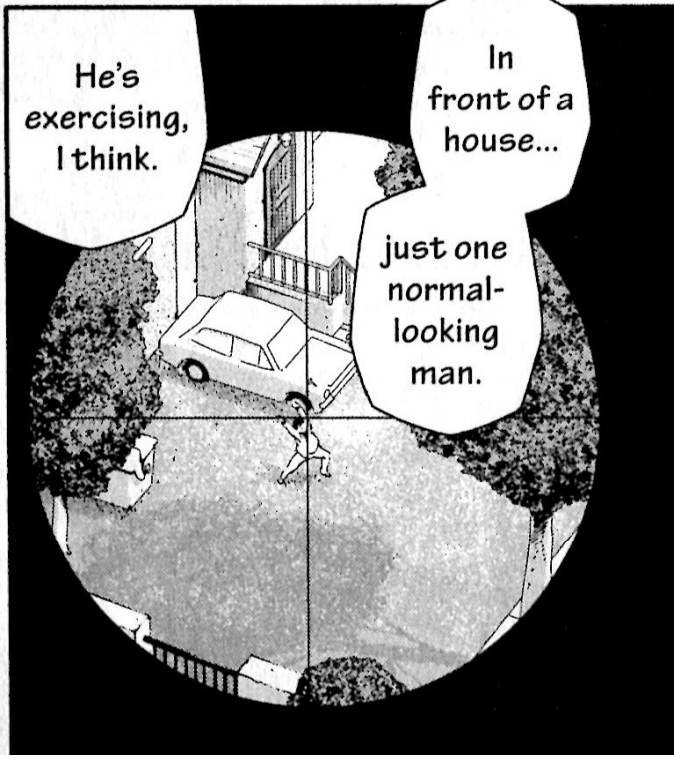



Central
Government
Area


...
Honestly, I'm not that impressed.

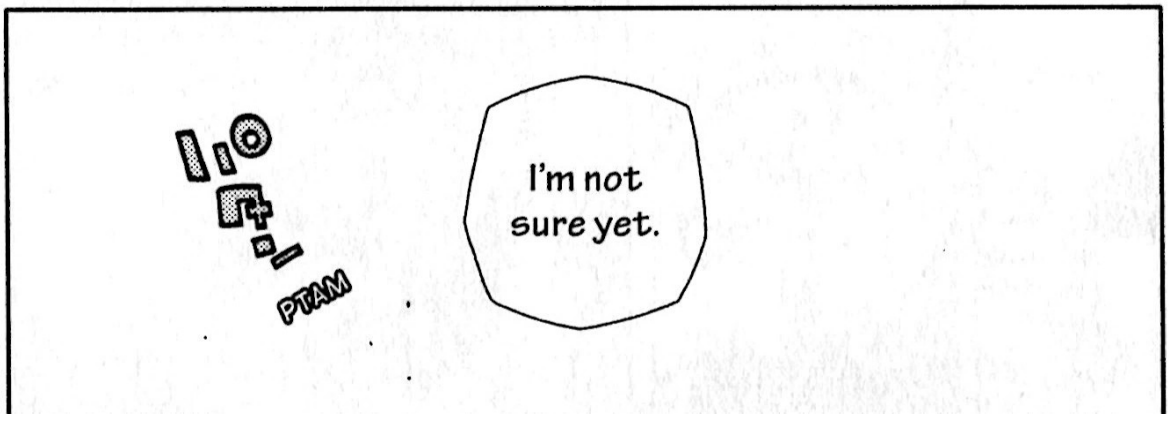

Really ?!
You did?!
I found one. A person.

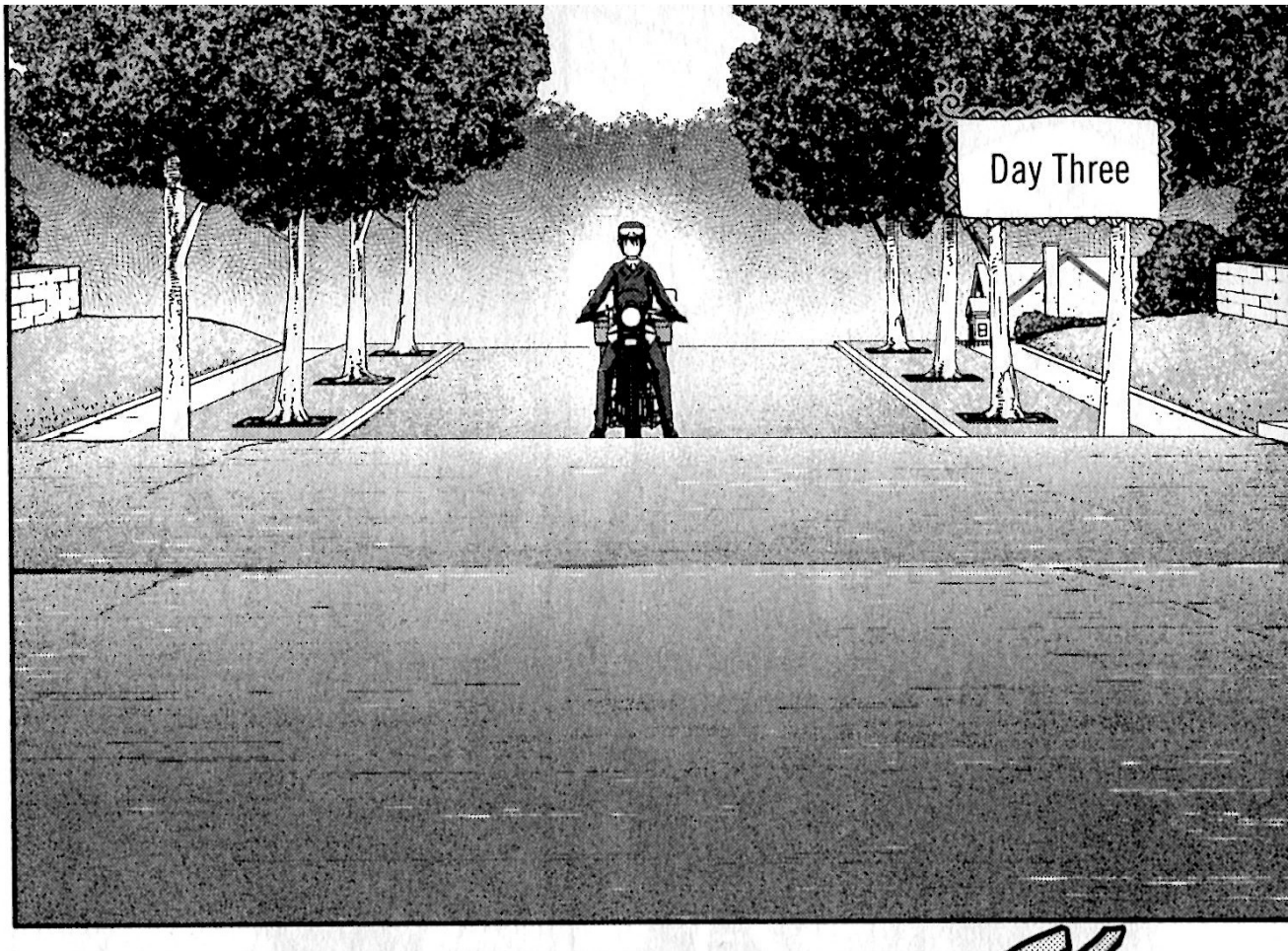

Ah, she went back inside.
There's someone at another house, farther away. A middle-aged woman.

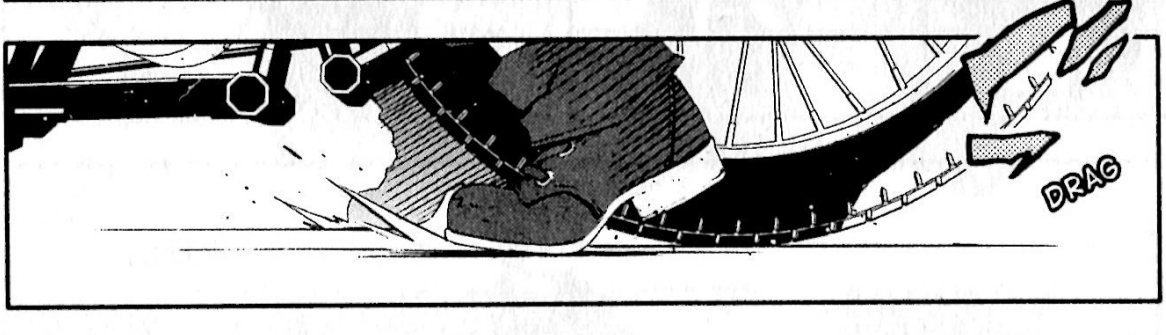

He's exercising, I think.
In front of a house... just one normal-looking man.


But why do you think we haven't run into anyone?
Right.
There is a sense that they had to be around somewhere.
There are other houses with the lights on, too.
SNAP
See? There are people here.
I told you so.

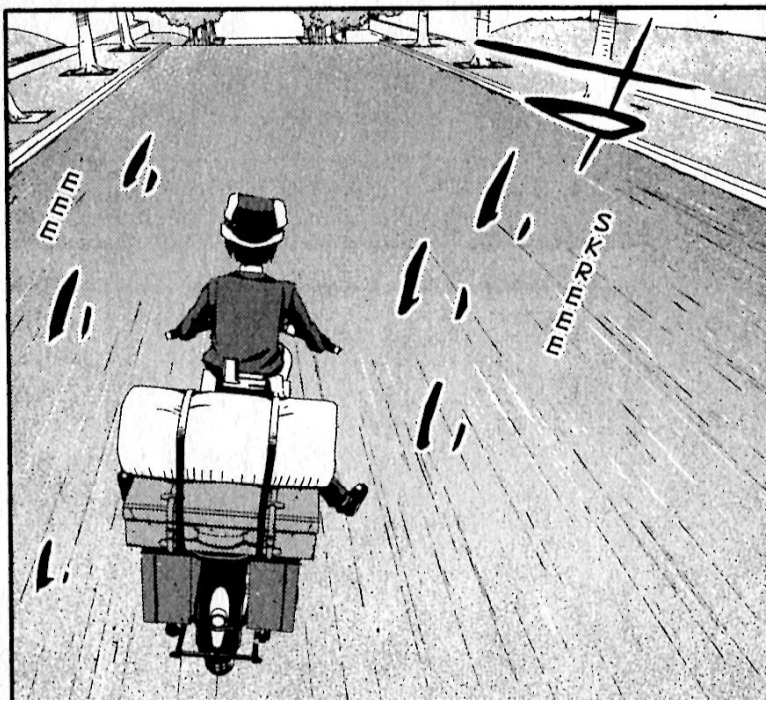

Hmm...


I'm not sure yet.
PTAM

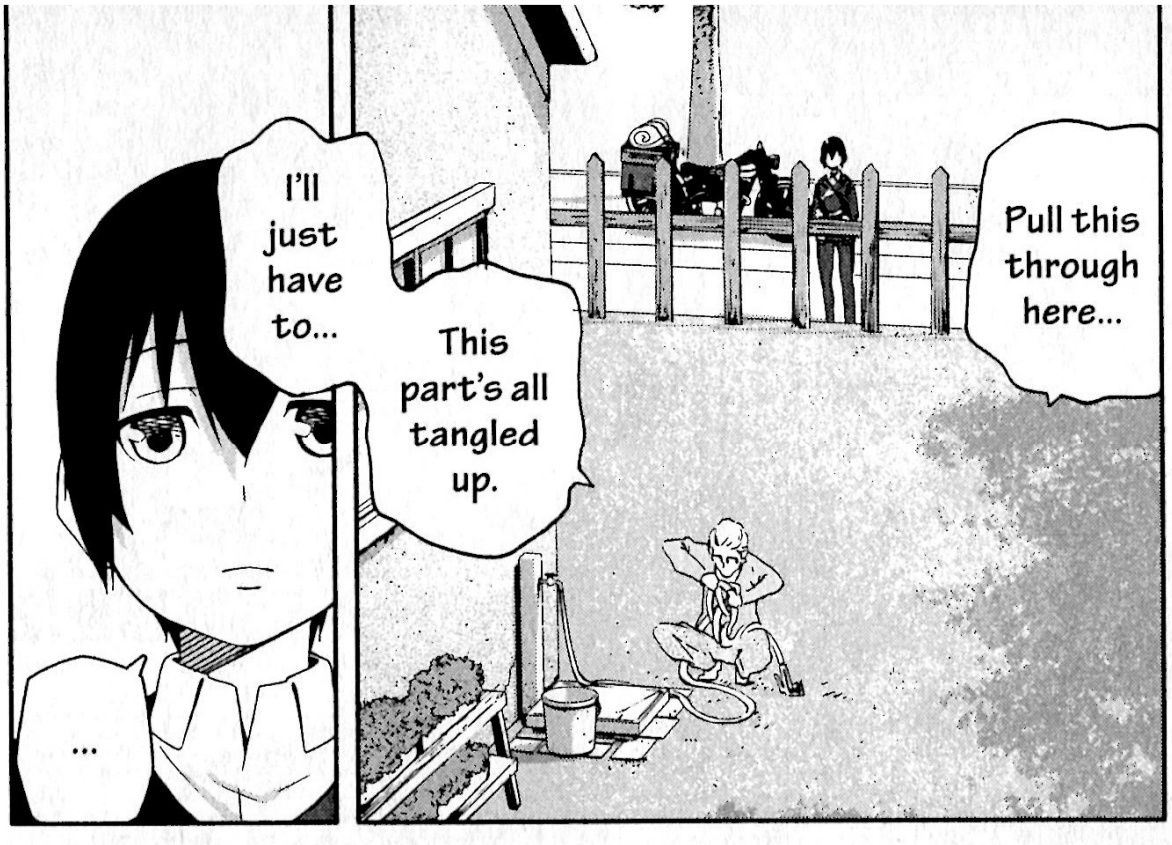

Day Three

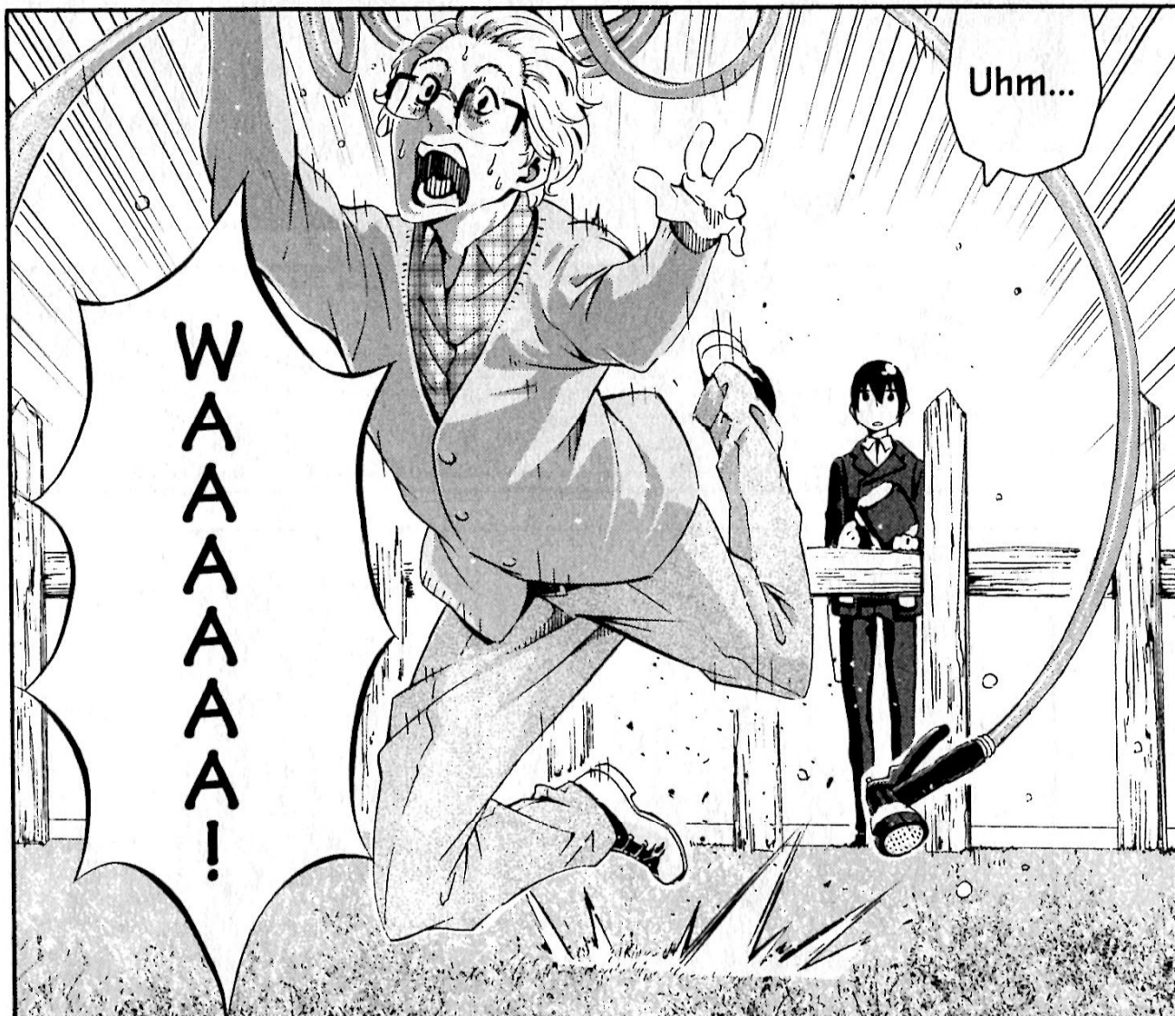

DRAG


There's still no one out and about.
Yeah...


EEEE
SKREEEE

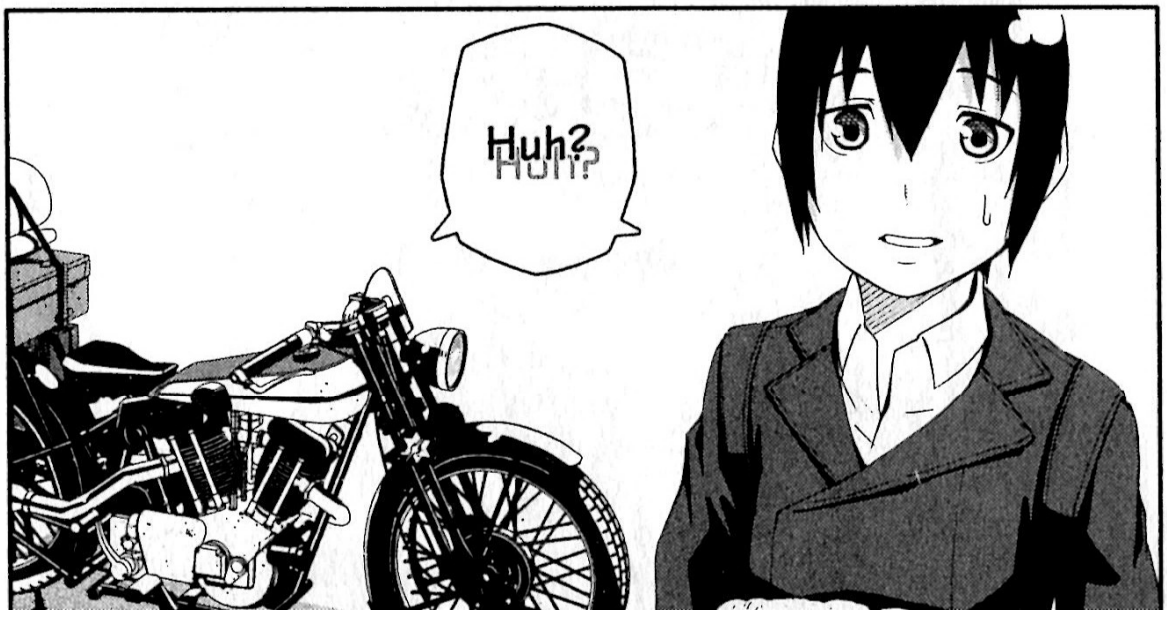

!!
THPP
THPP
THPP
THPP
SKREE
This is the first time we've seen anyone up close!
Ooh...

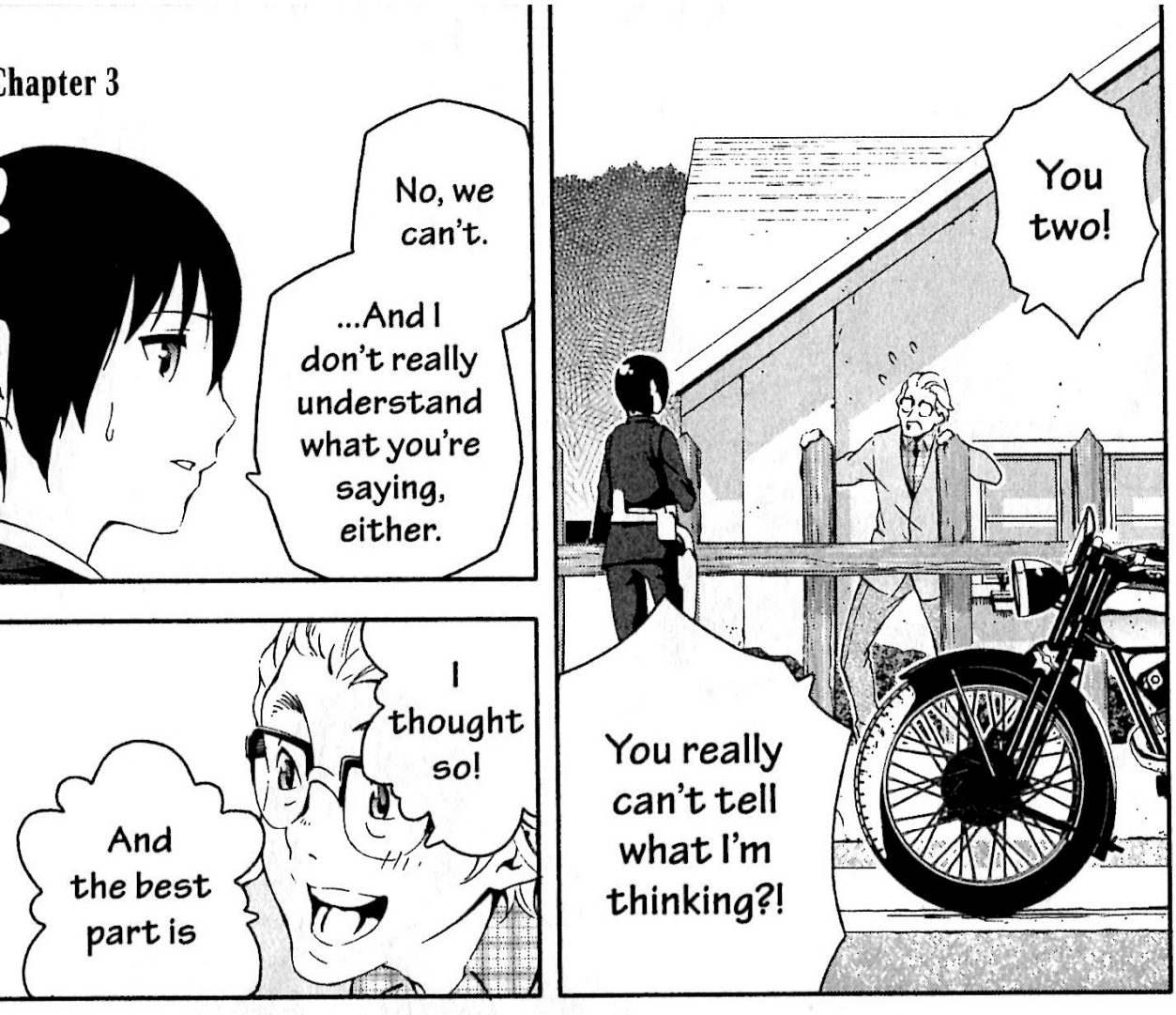

Pull this through here...
This part's all tangled up.
I'll just have to...
...

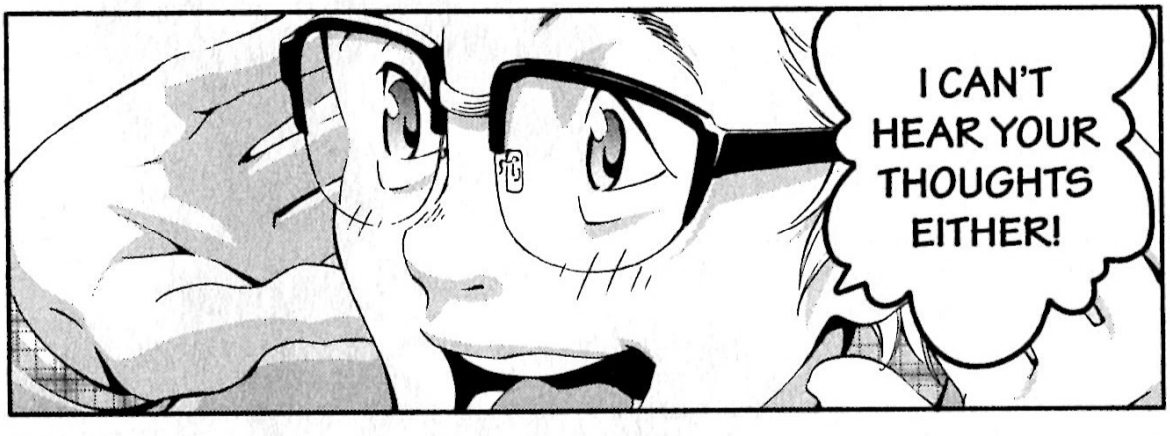

Uhm...
WAAAAAA!

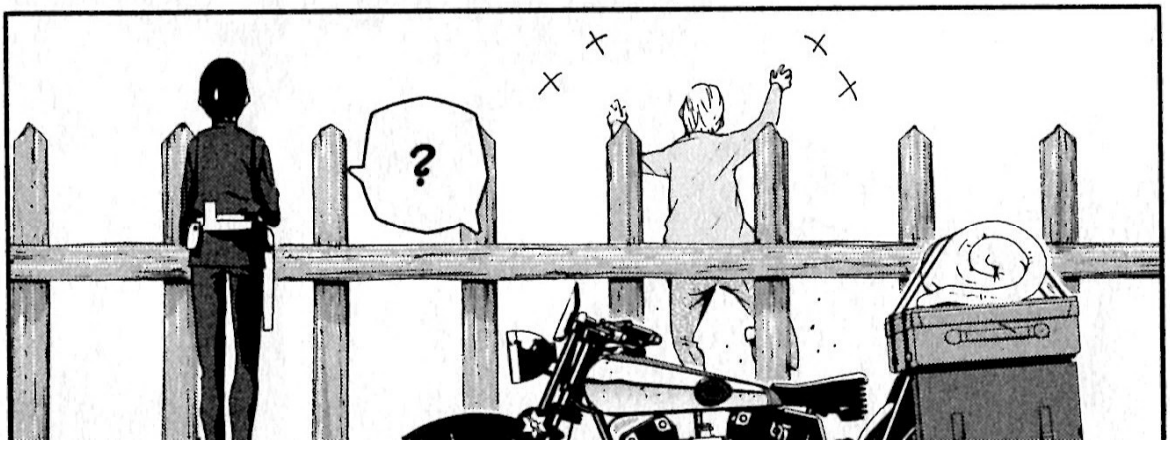

Are you all right?
I'm sorry for startling you.
BDUM
BDUM
Wh-Wh-Wh-Wh-Wh-Wh-Wh-Wh-Wh-Wh...
BDUM
I don't think that's the case...
Maybe they don't speak our language, Kino?
Wh-Wh-Wh-Wh-Who are... wh-wh-when...
Y-Y-Y-You two...

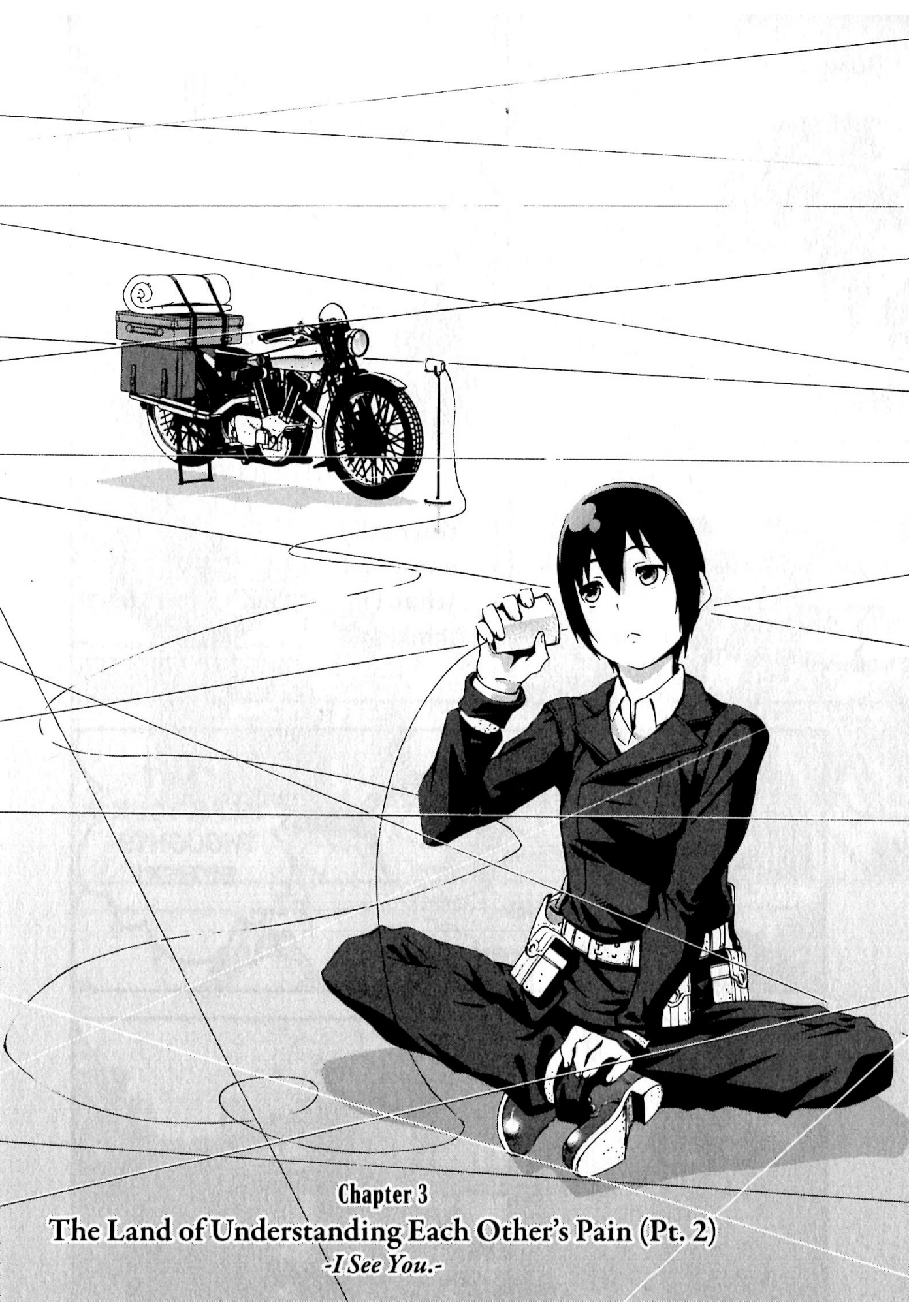

Could it be you can't tell what I'm thinking ?!


Huh?

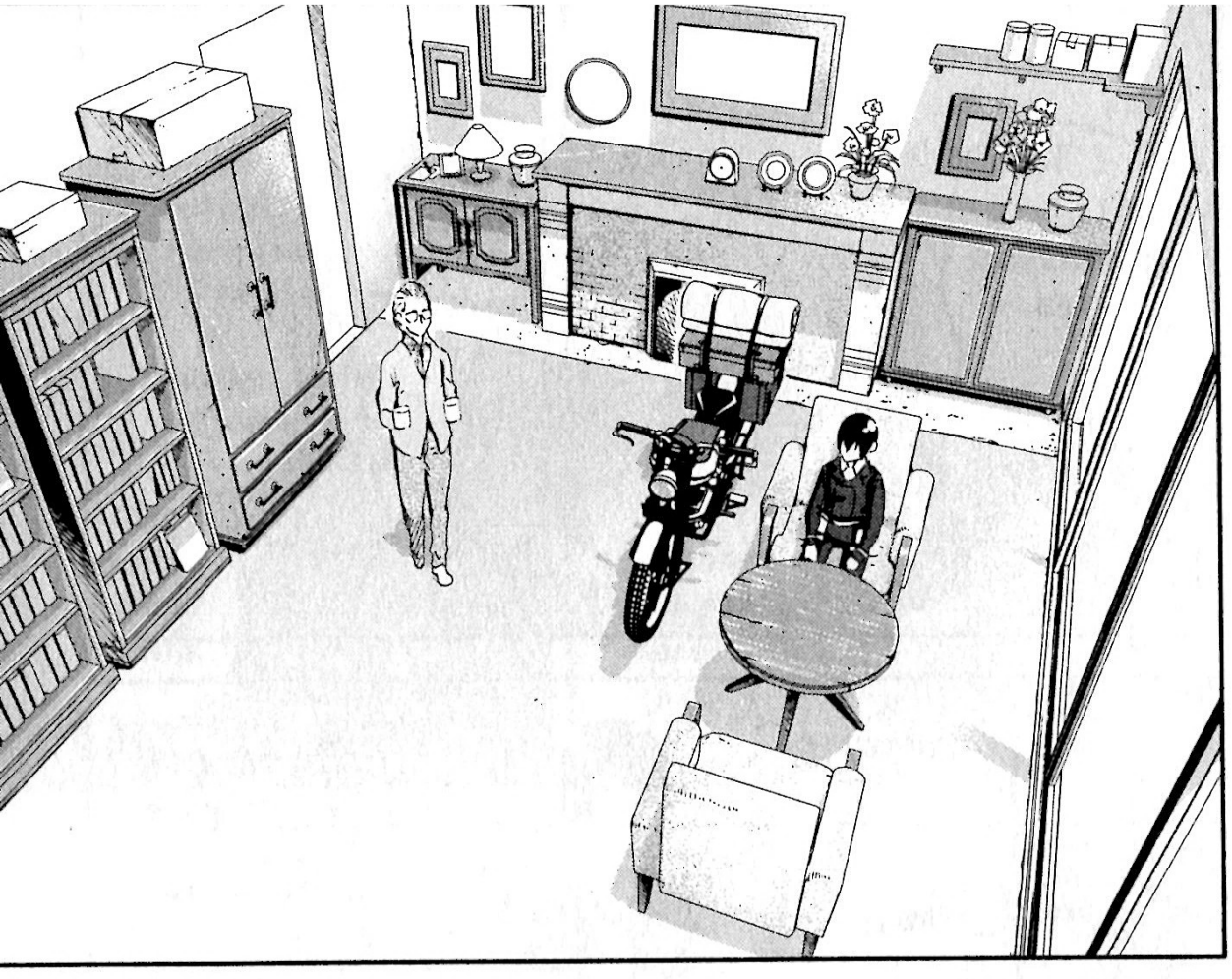

No, we can't.
...And I don't really understand what you're saying, either.
You two!
You really can't tell what I'm thinking?!
I thought so!
And the best part is


I CAN'T HEAR YOUR THOUGHTS EITHER!


?



Chapter 3
The Land of Understanding Each Other's Pain (Pt. 2)
-I See You.-



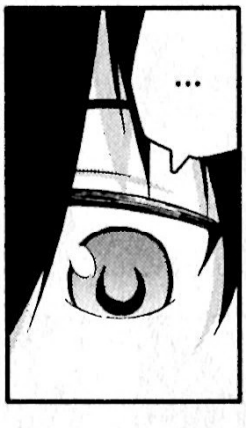

TNK
Here you are.


FWSH
Not at all.
I still have some time.
Sorry to delay your departure by being so insistent.

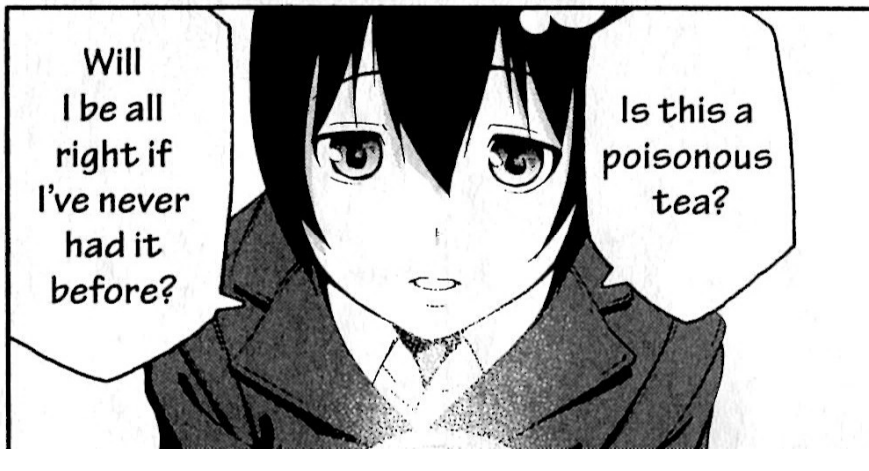

That's an interesting smell.
What kind of tea is this?
It's poisonblock tea.


We drink it quite often in this country.
POISON ?!


ha ha ha
You really aren't from these parts, eh?

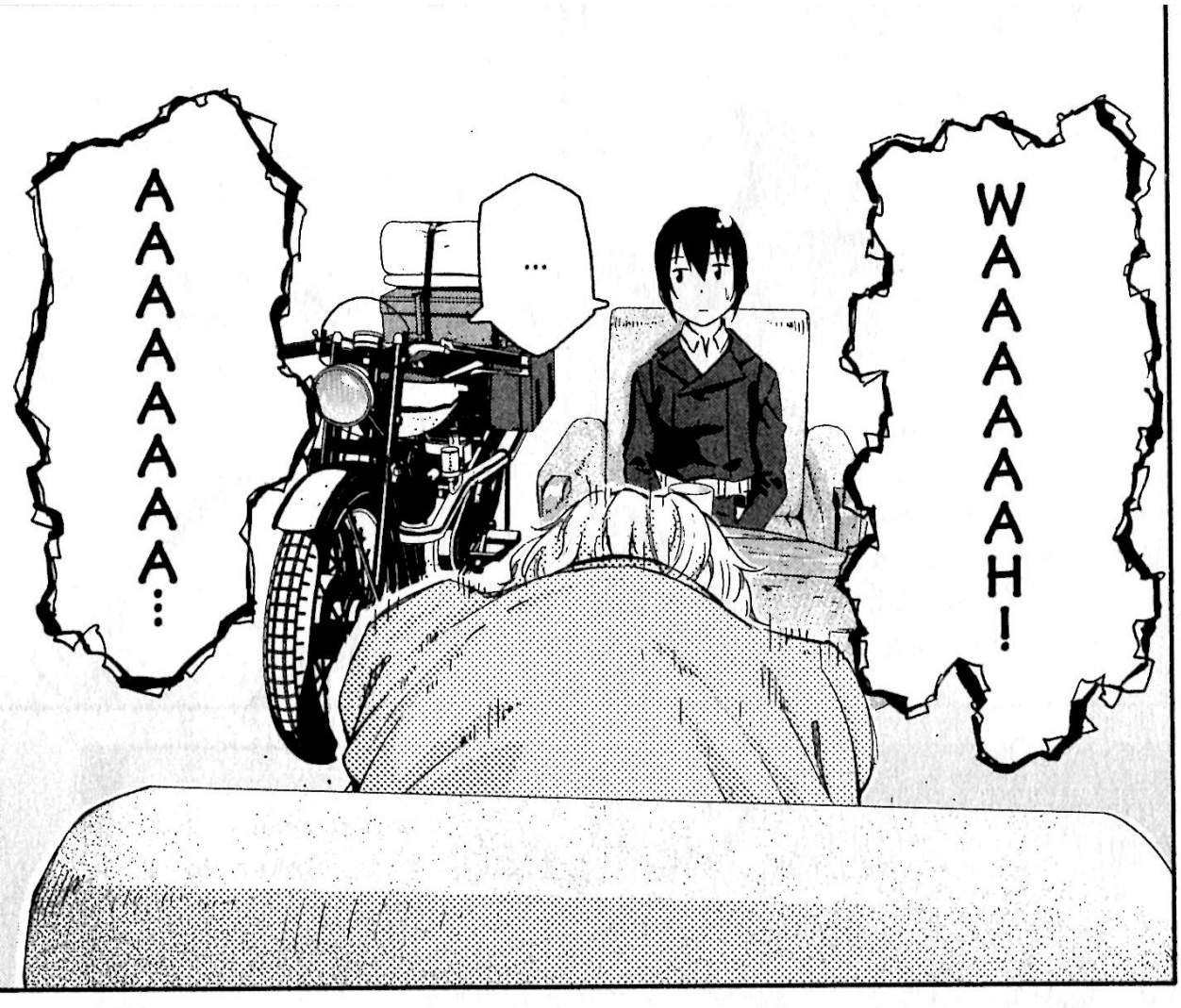

...

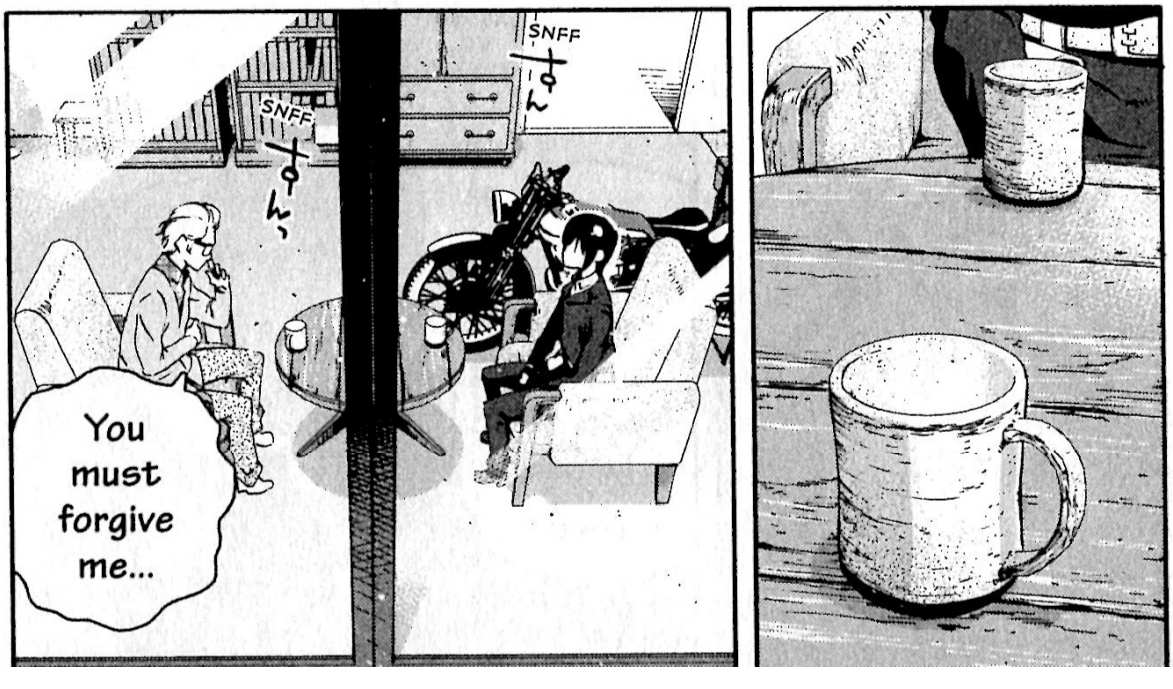

Is there poison in that?
Don't drink it, Kino!


Is this a poisonous tea?
Will I be all right if I've never had it before?


I'm sorry.
I'm not trying to tease you.
It's called "poison-block" because ...
it blocks poison
and stops it from working.
Right, silly me!
hee
hee
Of course you'd find it strange to be offered some kind of "poison" tea if you've never heard of it.
Besides ...
I... you know...
...I'm...
uh... uuh...
aa...


あ
AA
あ
AA
あ
AA

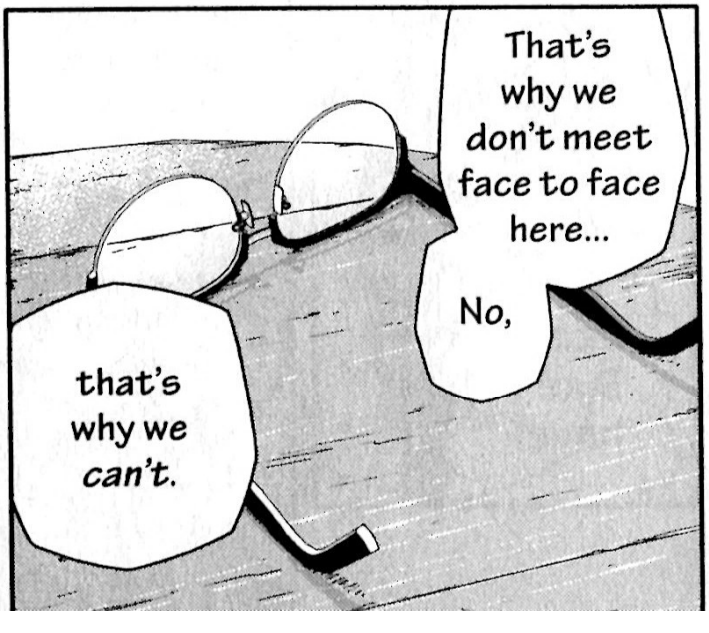

AAAAAAAA...
...
WAAAAAAH!

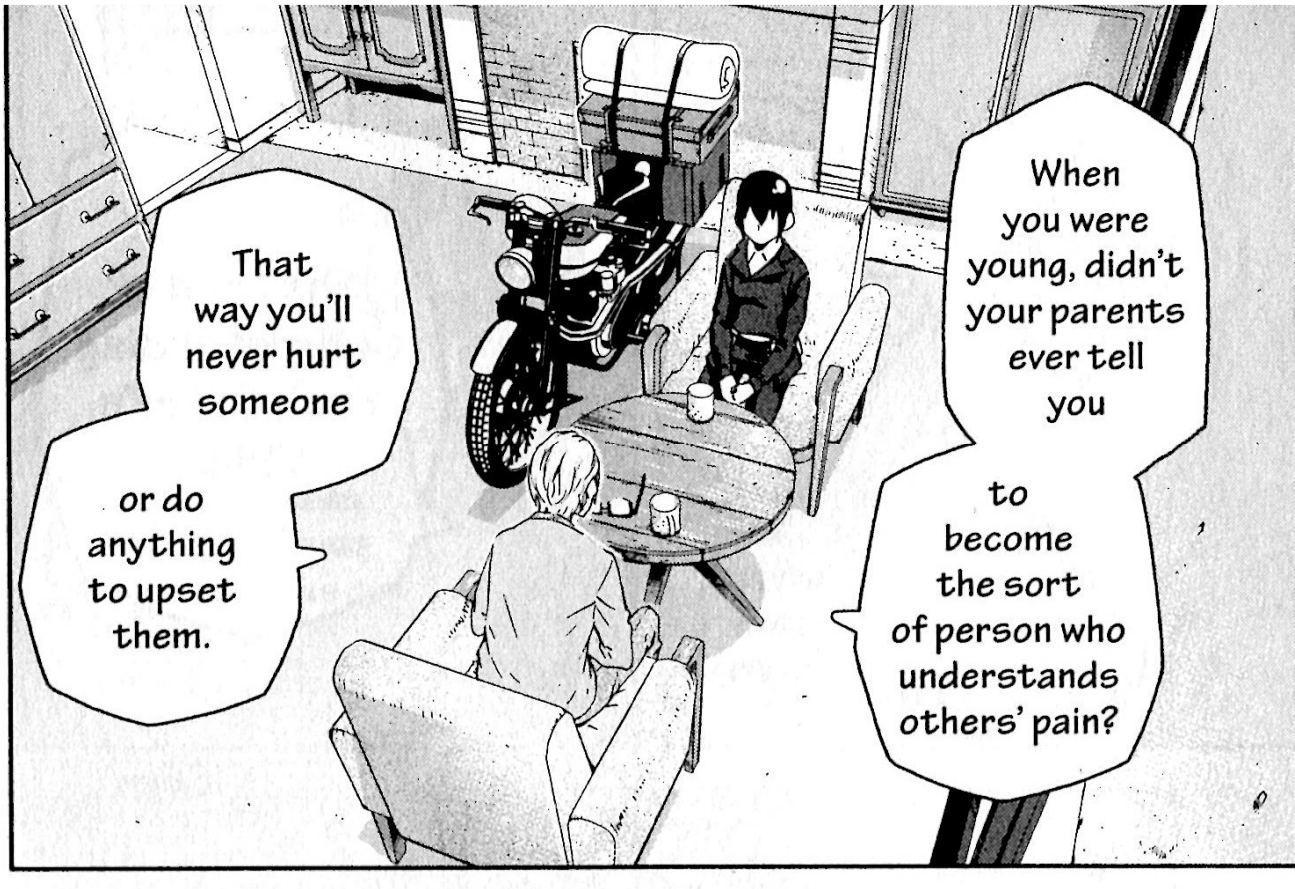

SNFF
ずん
SNFF
ずん
You must forgive me...

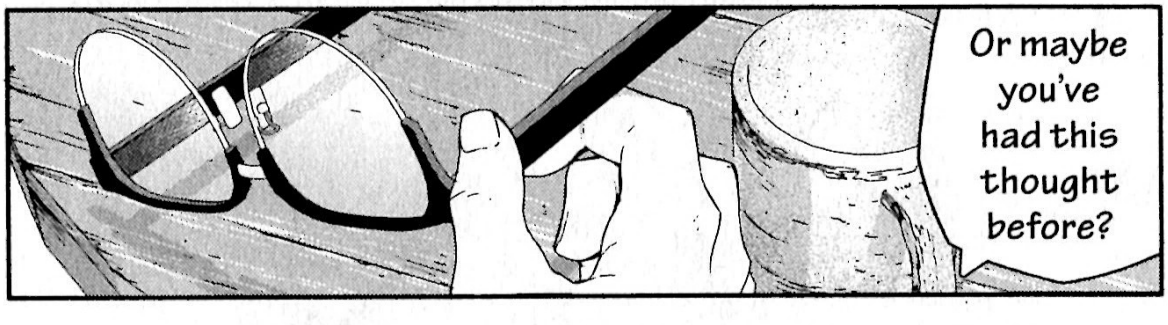

At first ...
I thought we hadn't seen anyone because travelers like us are so rare that they were frightened,
It's been ten years since I've spoken to another person.
No... maybe even longer.
but it seems like the citizens don't even interact with each other.
That's right.
This place is...
It's as if... no one in this land ever leaves their homes.
There was no one out and about.

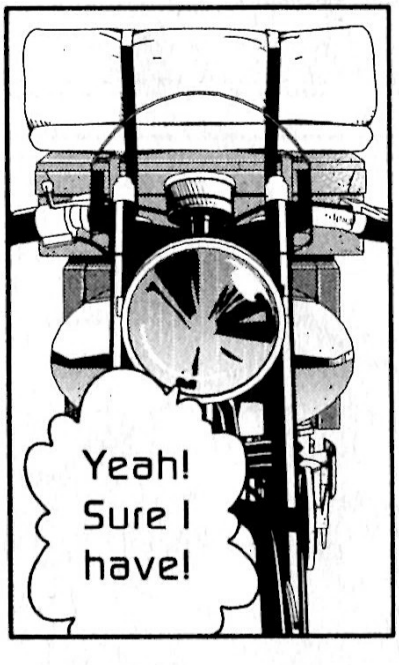

"The Land of Understanding Each Other's Pain."

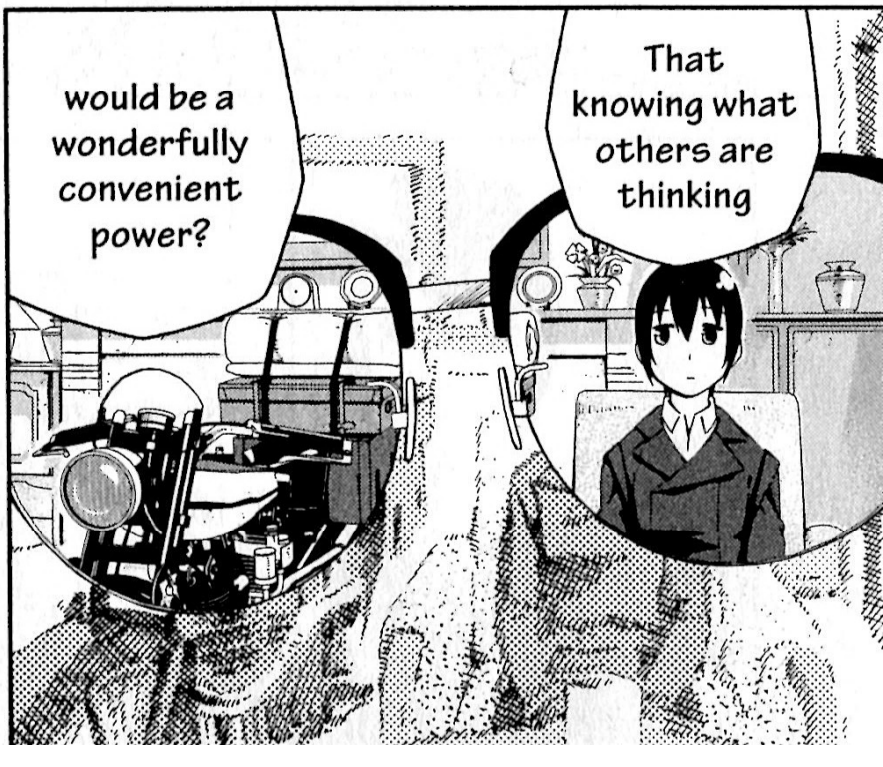

Under-standing each other's pain?


That's why we don't meet face to face here...
No,
that's why we can't.


When you were young, didn't your parents ever tell you
to become the sort of person who understands others' pain?
That way you'll never hurt someone
or do anything to upset them.

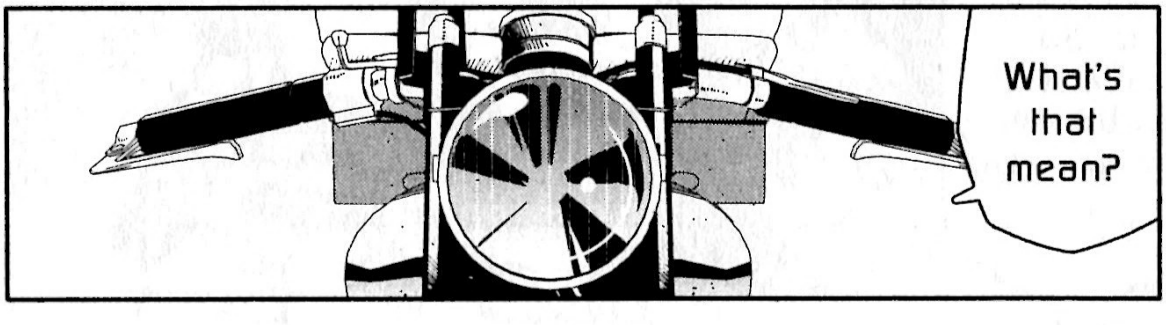

Or maybe you've had this thought before?

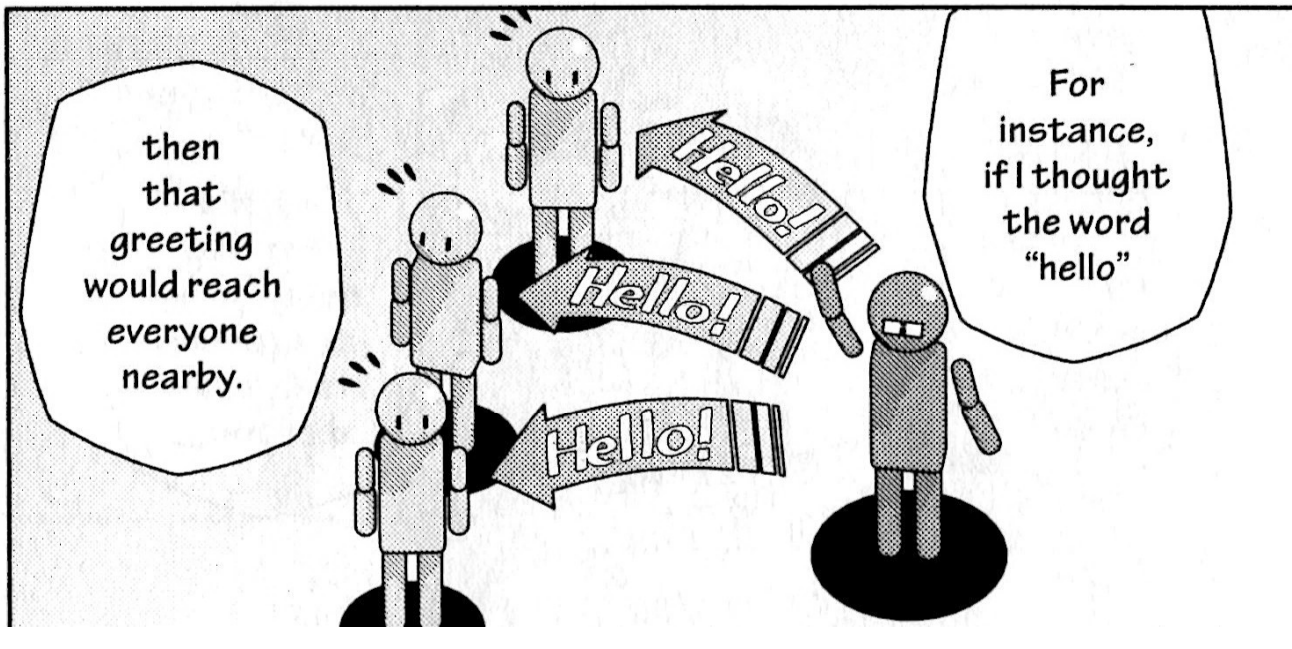

Yeah! Sure I have!

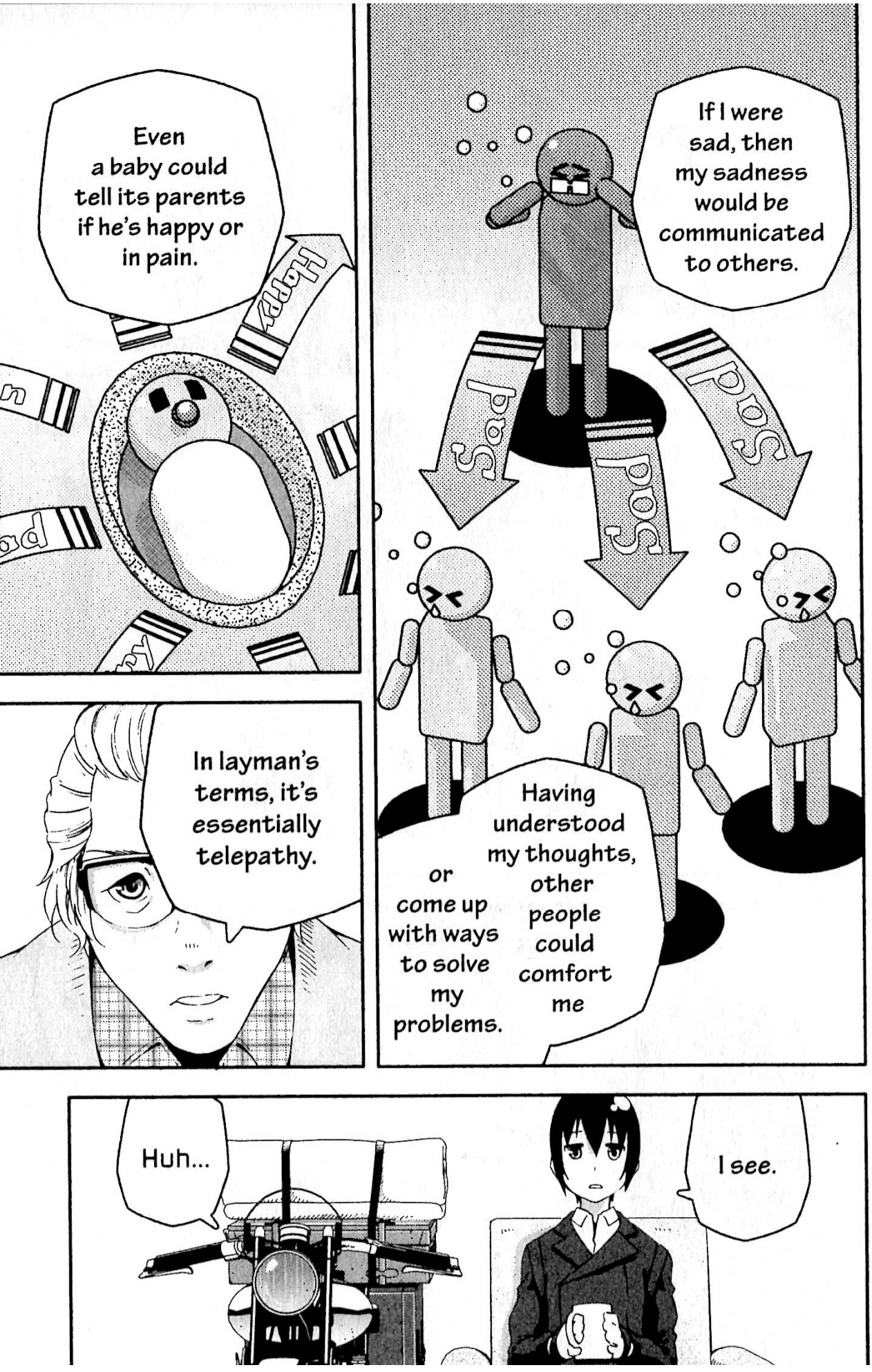

That knowing what others are thinking
would be a wonderfully convenient power?


The people of this country thought the same thing.
I said I'm sorry, Hermes.
Like when we first arrived here, for instance.
Right, Kino?
With so much time on our hands,
the people focused on cerebral pursuits like literature and music.
We have abundant food supplies, and the country is quite safe.
For a long time, machines have done most of the work here.
If they develop a part of the brain that normally isn't used...
Then one day,
a group that was researching the human brain made a discovery.


then humans could communicate their thoughts directly
with each other.


What's that mean?


For instance, if I thought the word "hello"
Hello!
Hello!
Hello!
then that greeting would reach everyone nearby.

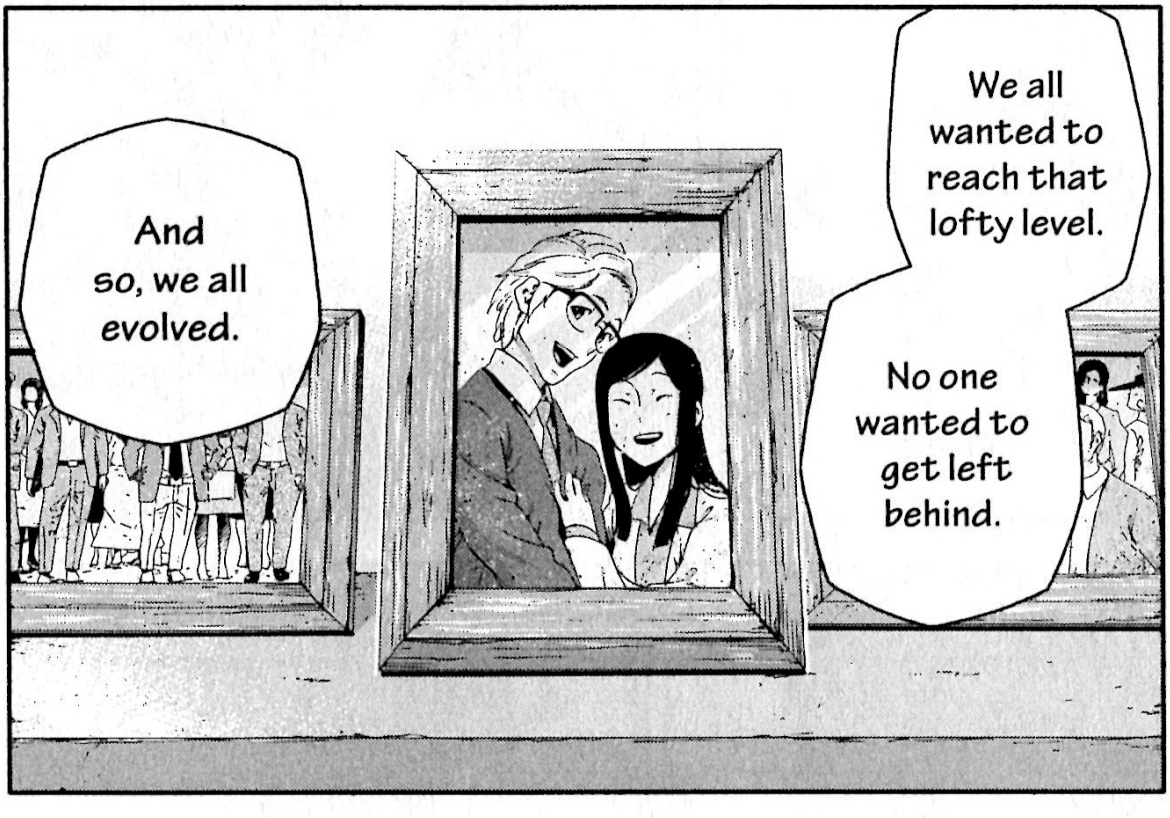

Even a baby could tell its parents if he's happy or in pain.
Happy
If I were sad, then my sadness would be communicated to others.
Sad
Sad
Sad
Having understood my thoughts, other people could comfort me or come up with ways to solve my problems.
In layman's terms, it's essentially telepathy.
Huh...
I see.





AND EVERYONE IN THE COUNTRY DRANK IT.


Yes, everyone.
Everyone ?

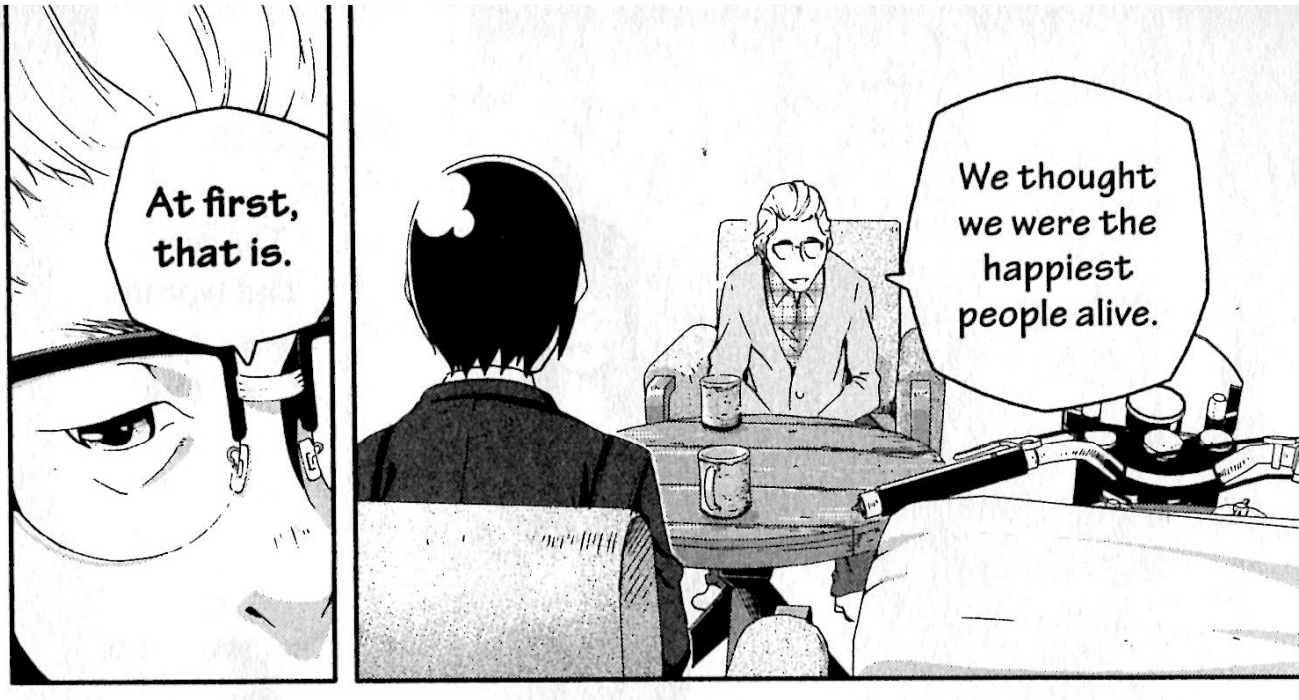

We all wanted to reach that lofty level.
No one wanted to get left behind.
And so, we all evolved.

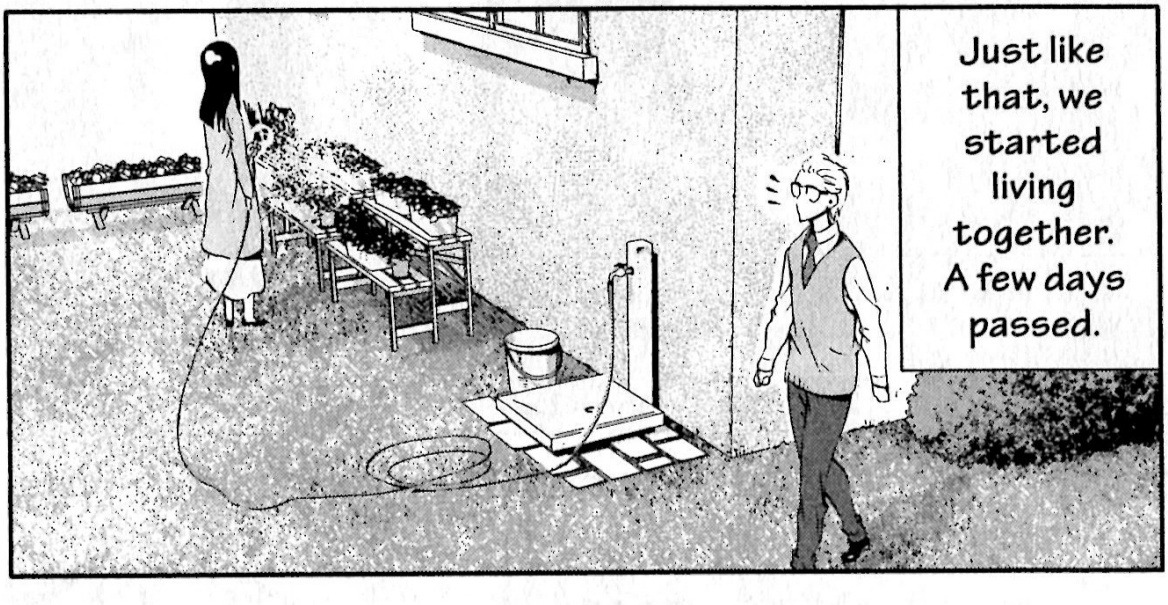

...
I'll tell you what I personally experienced.

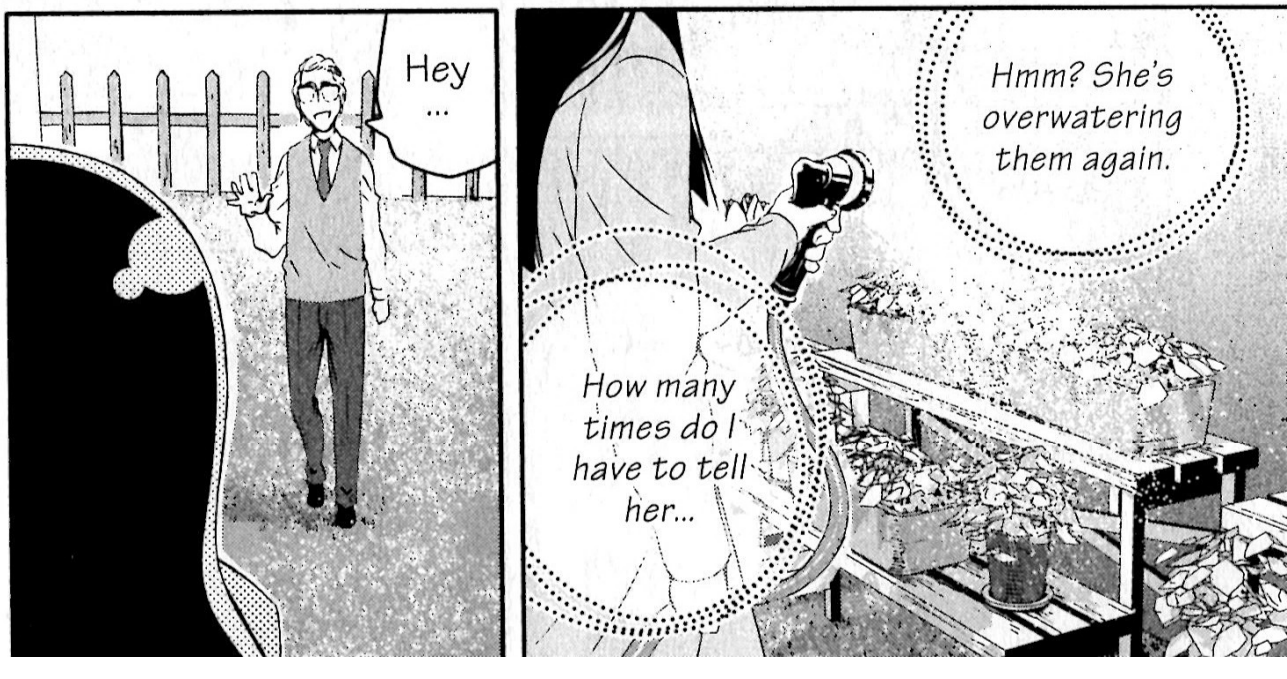

So...
what happened next?


JUMP
Hey, can you hear me?
It was the day after we drank the elixir.
Come down and see me.
I'm on your doorstep right now.
GACHAK

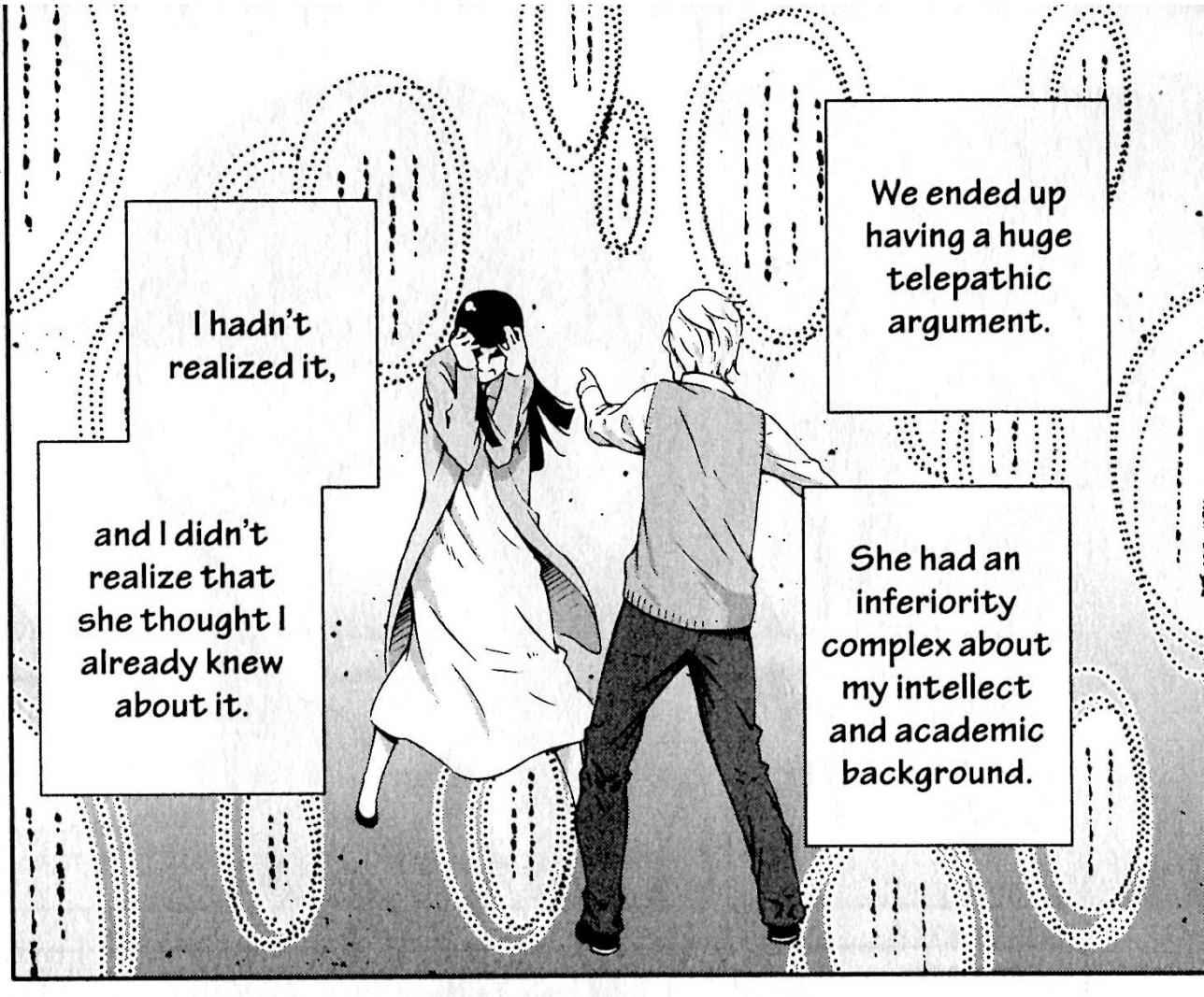

There was the woman I was seeing at the time.
We were so, so happy.
We said "I love you" through our minds countless times.
I can hear your thoughts !
Hi!
Amazing ...!
I can hear yours, too!

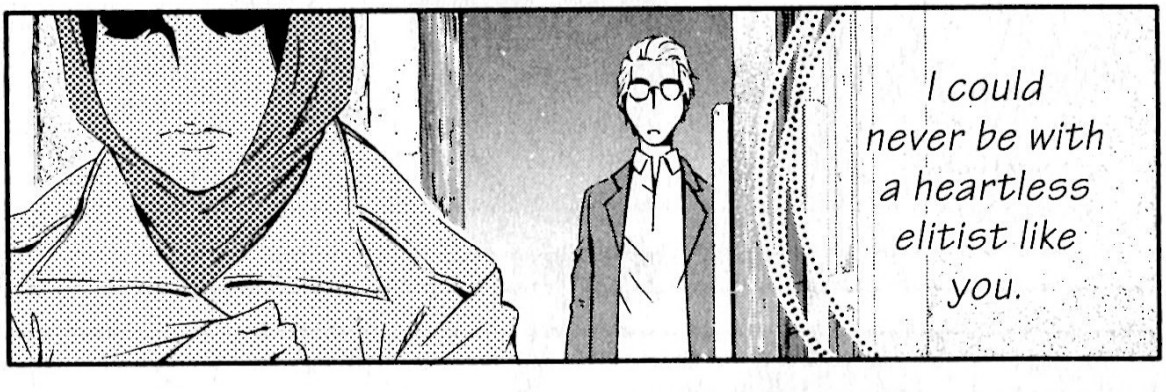

At first, that is.
We thought we were the happiest people alive.

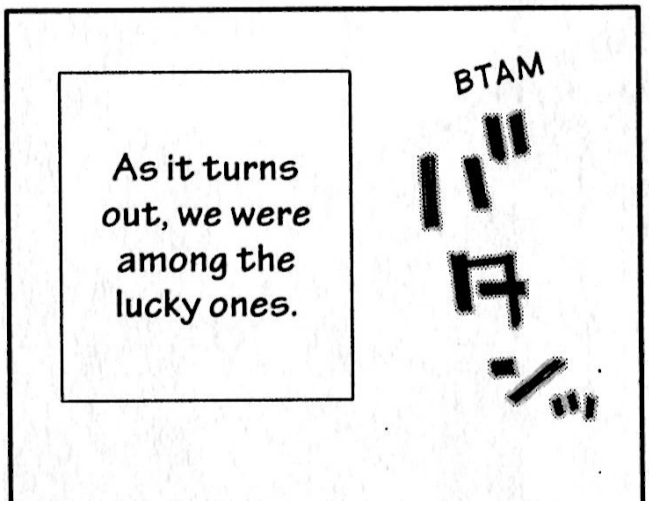

Just like that, we started living together. A few days passed.


Hey ...
Hmm? She's overwatering them again.
How many times do I have to tell her...

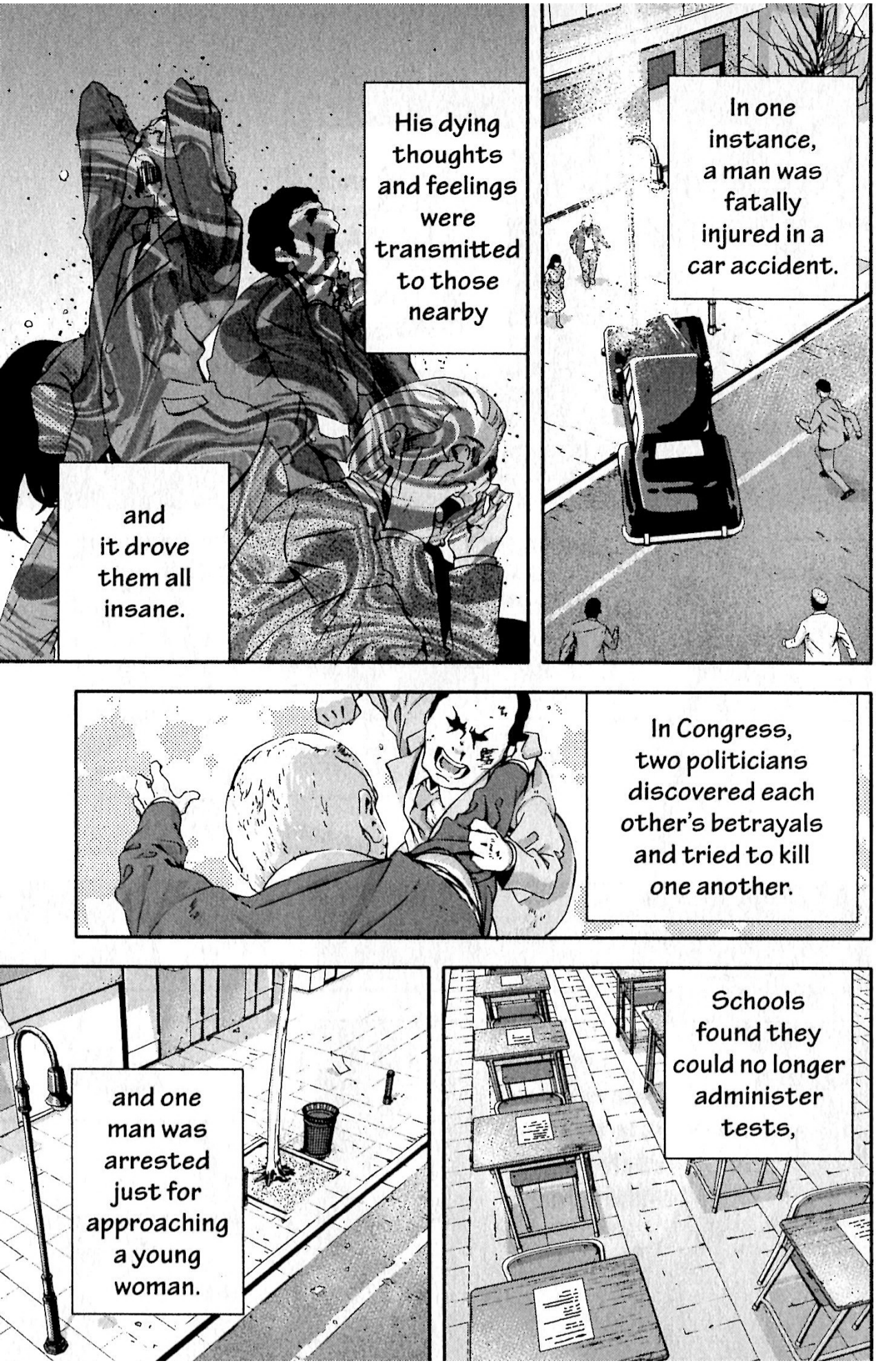

What do you mean, "how many times"?
Do you think I'm stupid?!
I just ...
Why is she angry over something so trivial?
What's going on here...?
No...
Trivial?! You think it's trivial?!
So what's important to me is trivial to you, then?!

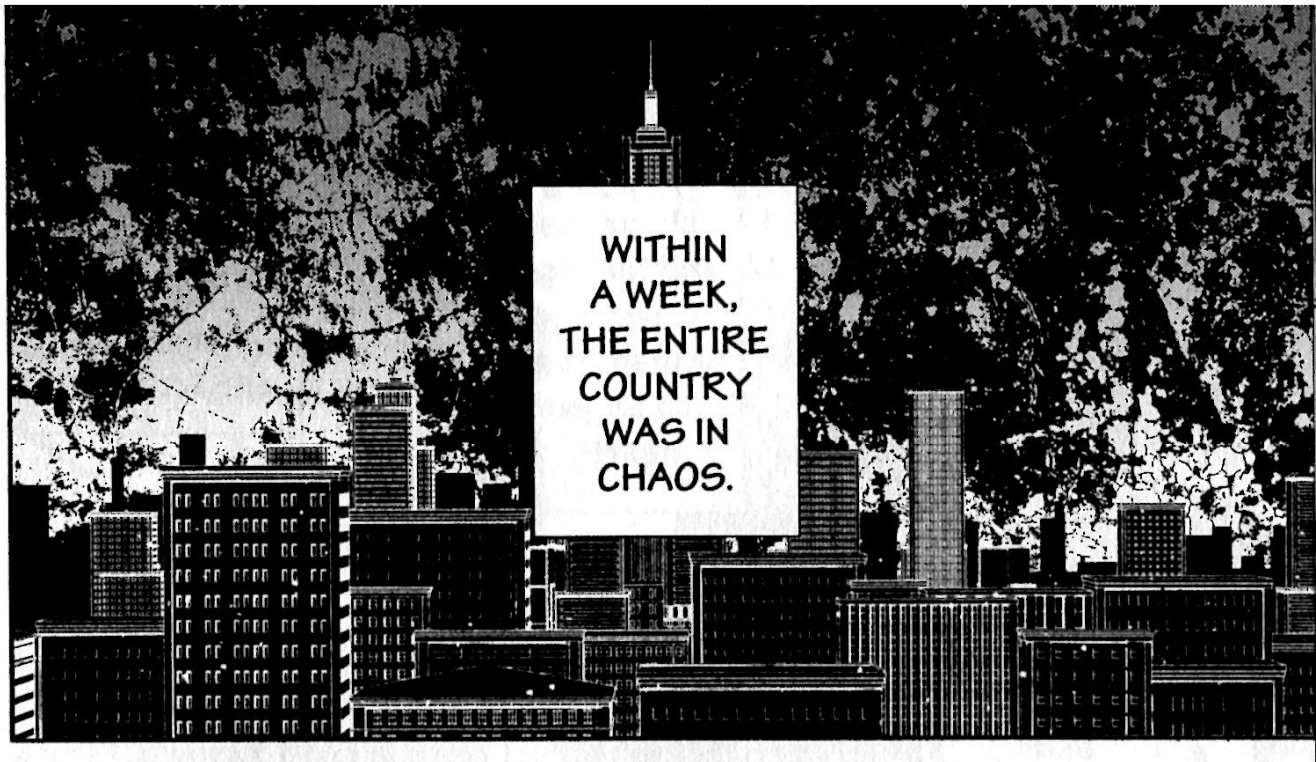

We ended up having a huge telepathic argument.
I hadn't realized it,
and I didn't realize that she thought I already knew about it.
She had an inferiority complex about my intellect and academic background.

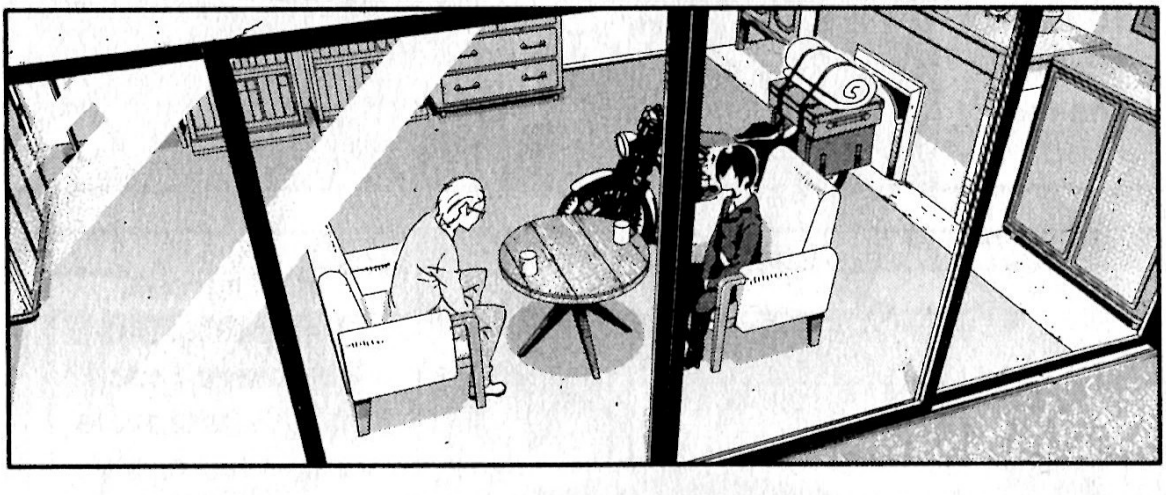

I could never be with a heartless elitist like you.

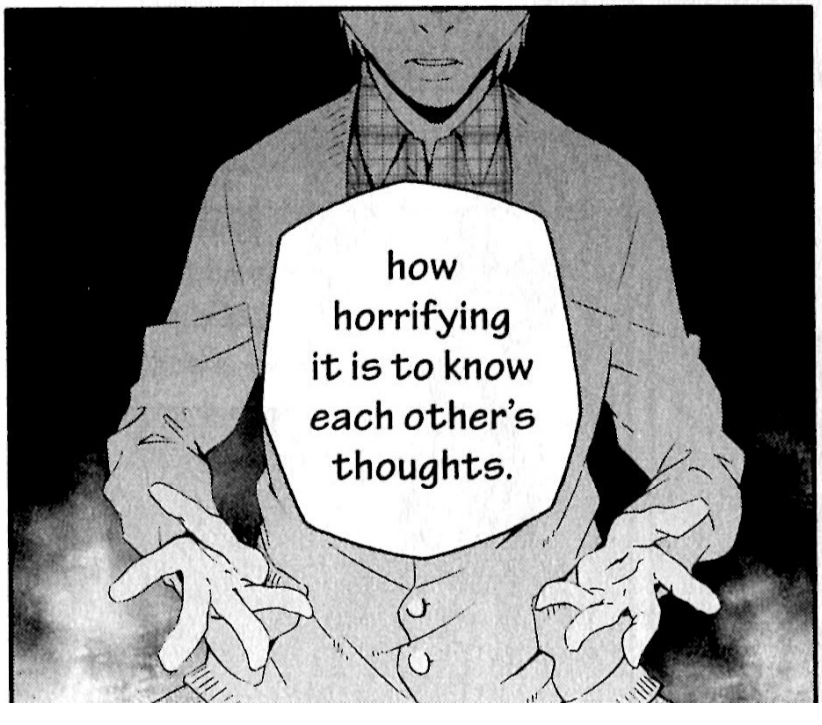

As it turns out, we were among the lucky ones.
BTAM


KREEAK


His dying thoughts and feelings were transmitted to those nearby
and it drove them all insane.
In one instance, a man was fatally injured in a car accident.
In Congress, two politicians discovered each other's betrayals and tried to kill one another.
and one man was arrested just for approaching a young woman.
Schools found they could no longer administer tests,


WITHIN A WEEK, THE ENTIRE COUNTRY WAS IN CHAOS.




how horrifying it is to know each other's thoughts.


And then...?


We finally realized too late...


"If you understand others' pain, you can be kind towards them."
"You'll have more respect for each other."
All that ...
was a whopping lie.
In the end, feeling someone else's pain when you're happy only brings harm.
It does nothing to alleviate the pain of the one who's suffering.
There was only one solution to this bedlam.

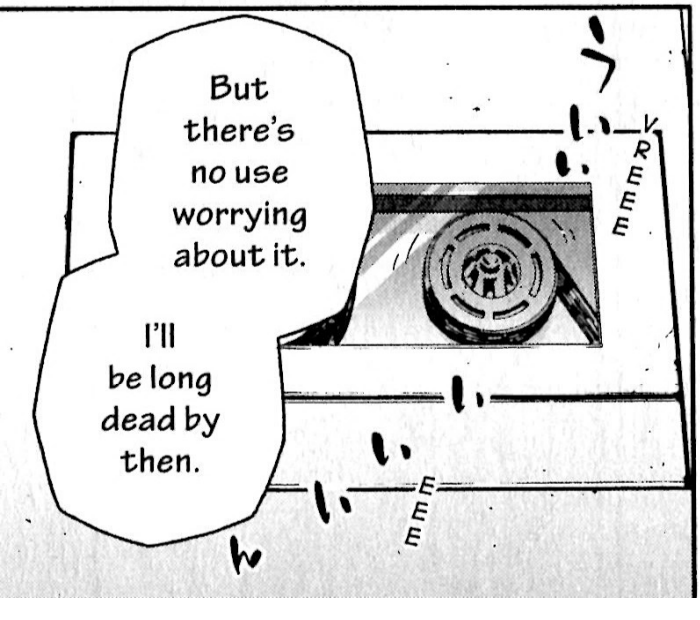

To get away from each other.

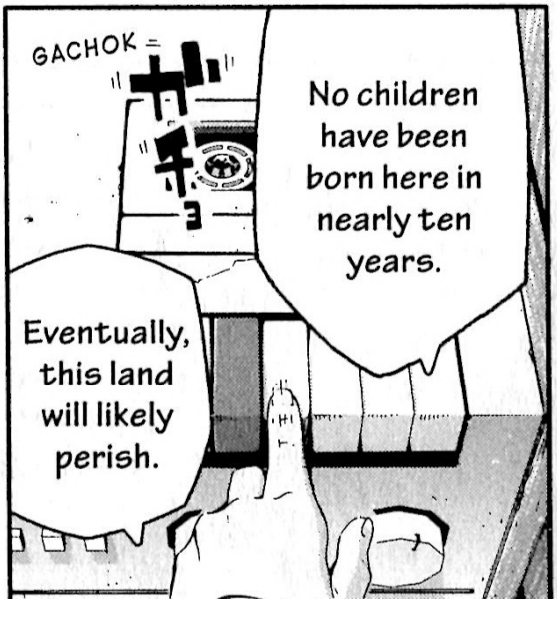

thoughts won't reach you, either.

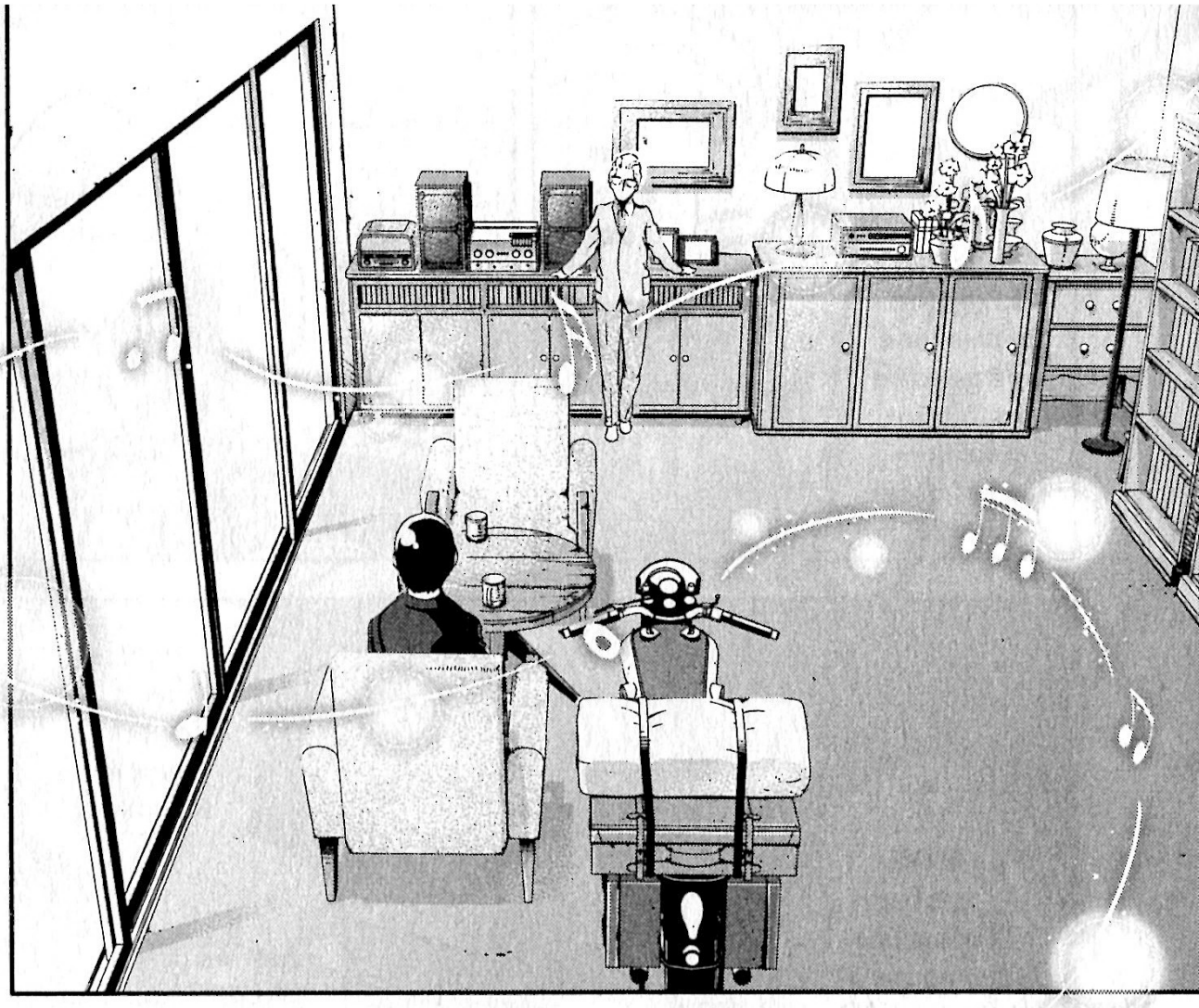

That's right.
Just as you can't hear sounds from far away,


I'm afraid so.
Everyone in this land has genuine anthropo-phobia—fear of other people.
I get it.
So that's how it is.


Each person lives alone, in a house all their own, doing whatever they like...
Thanks to that, we developed better machines,
and now we can live without ever seeing another soul.


But there's no use worrying about it.
I'll be long dead by then.
VREEE
EEE


GACHOK
No children have been born here in nearly ten years.
Eventually, this land will likely perish.

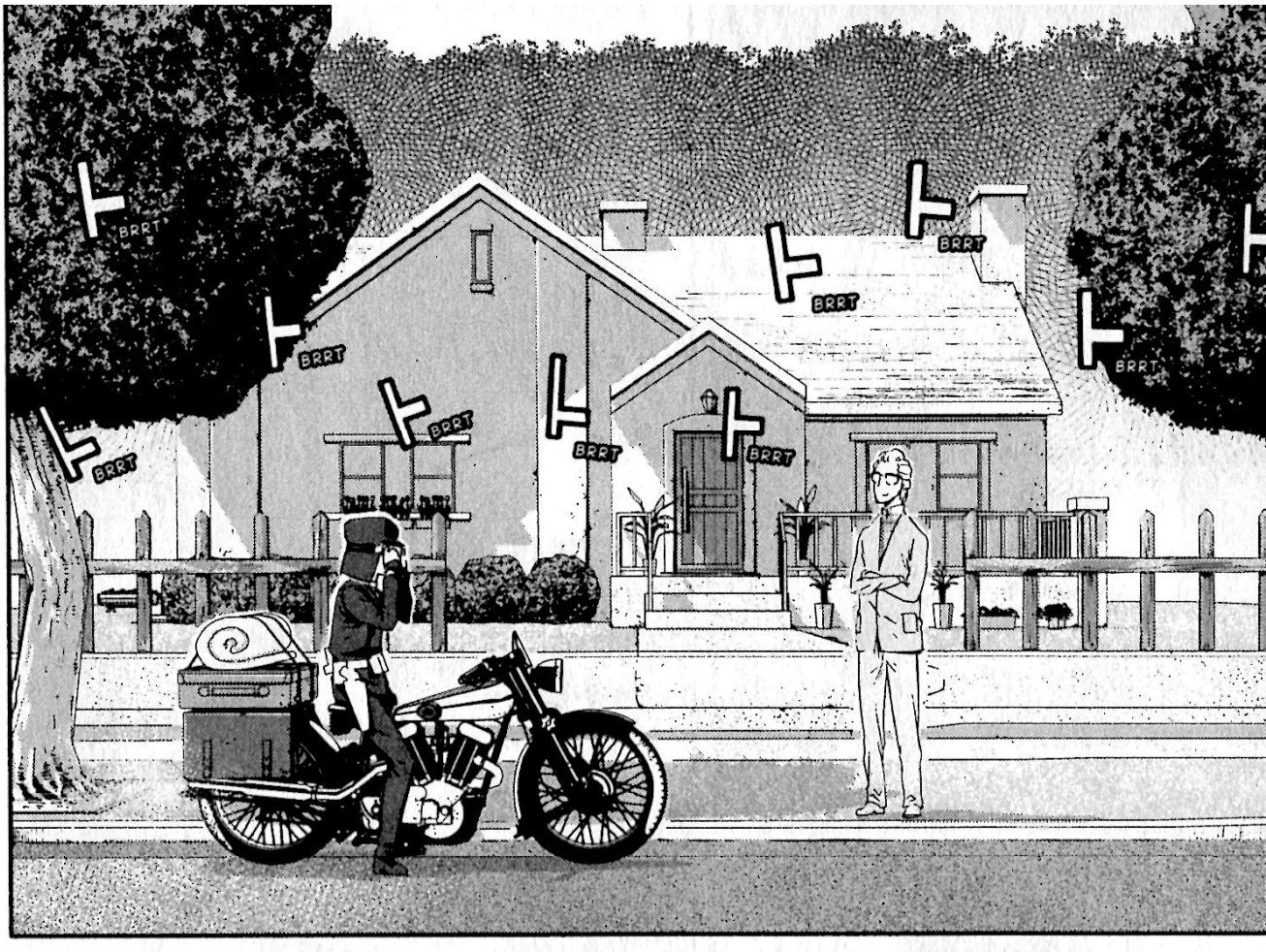





Whenever I listen to it, I can't help wondering ...
I've always loved this song.
It was very popular ten years ago.

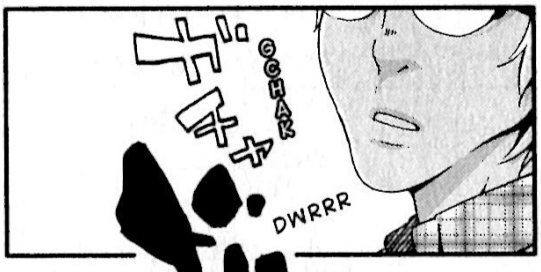

What a nice song.
...


What did she
really think of this song?
When others heard this song,
were they moved the same way I was?
What about you, Kino?
I don't want to know the answer.
The truth is...


BRRT


Thanks.
We'll be careful.


I really enjoyed our visit, Kino.
Take care on your journey.
You too, Hermes.


GCHAK
DWRRR

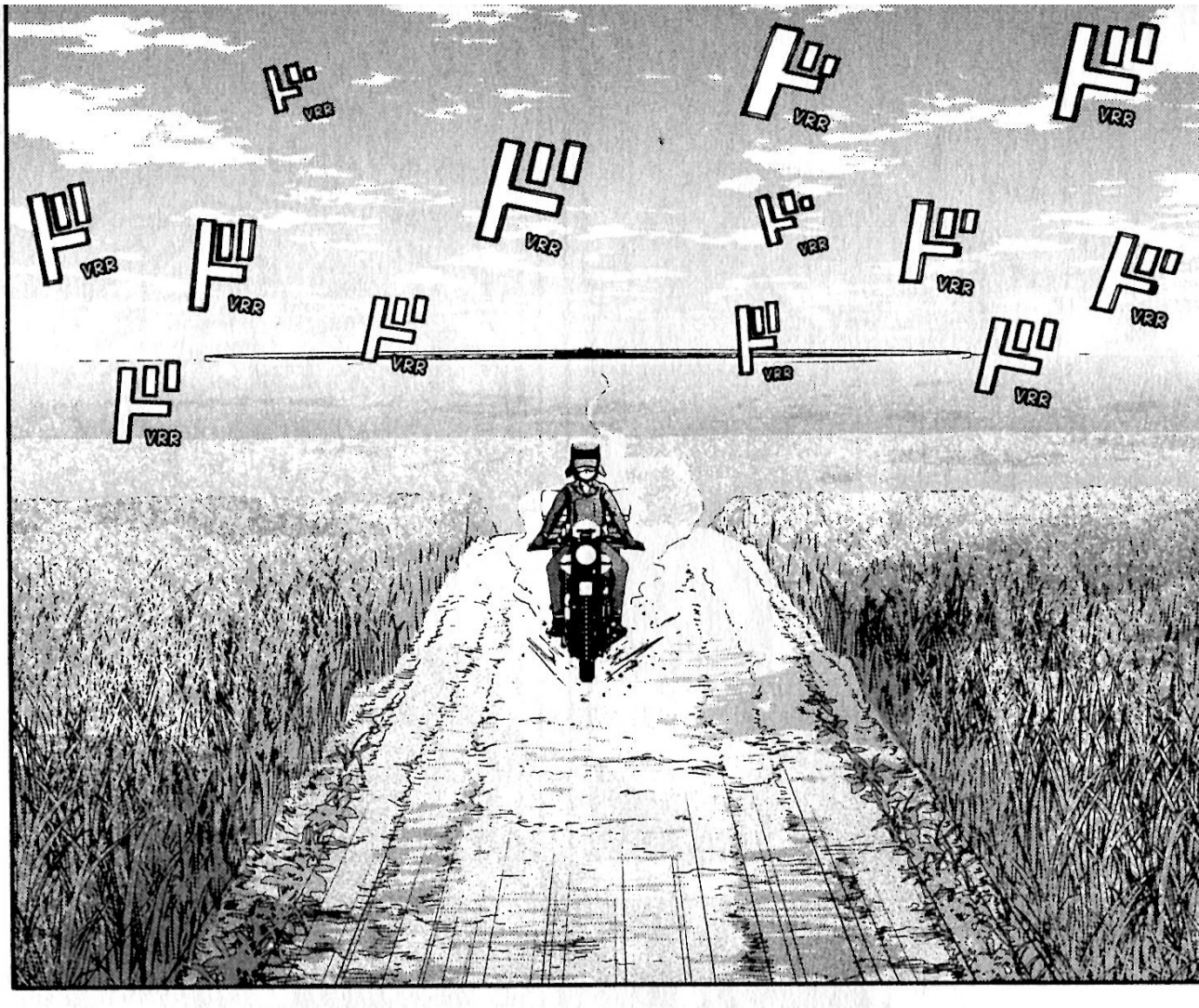

...
VRR
VRR
VRR


We'll be off.
Thank you for the tea.
It was delicious.
BRRT

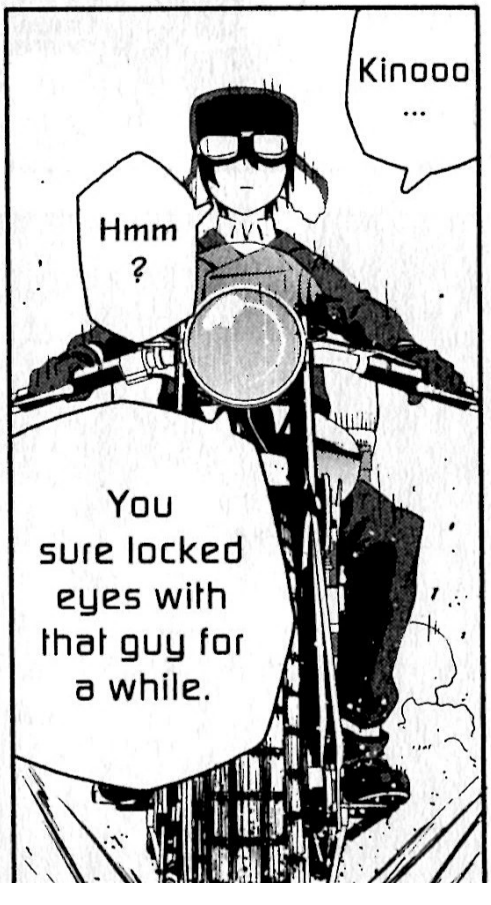

BRRT
Uhm... if you'd like...
?
W- WAIT!
SKREECH
h... how about... living here with me?
Aside from the solitude, it's comfortable and safe.
You could use this as a base for your travels.
What do you think, Hermes?
A... And, well...
if it'd be all right with you, Kino, we could...


O-Oh, really?
Uhm... sorry for making such a strange suggestion.
Thank you, but I'm sorry.
I'd like to continue my journey.
Err...
Well, uhm...
...


VROOM
ドド VRR
ドド VRR
ドド VRR
ドド VRR
ドド VRR
ドド VRR


ドゥ VRR
ドゥ VRR
ドゥ VRR
ドゥ VRR
ドゥ VRR
ドゥ VRR
ドゥ VRR
ドゥ VRR
ドゥ VRR
ドゥ VRR


Did you make a love connection?
Uh, no?
What does that even mean?


Kinooo ...
Hmm ?
You sure locked eyes with that guy for a while.

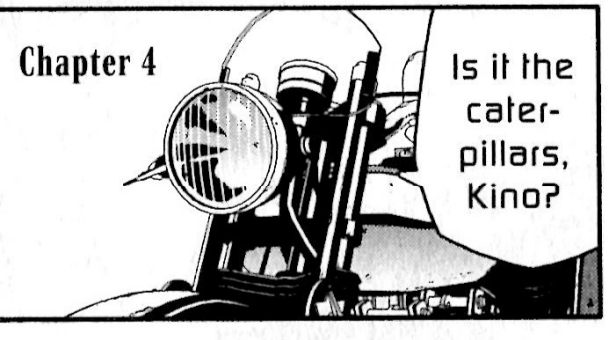

I was afraid you were gonna get married for a second there.
Don't be ridiculous.


So I tried to send him a reply...
"Thank you."
I just got the feeling that he was thinking, "Don't die out there."
Uh-huh. So?
But do you think it actually got through?
I see.
ドVRR


heh


Who knows?

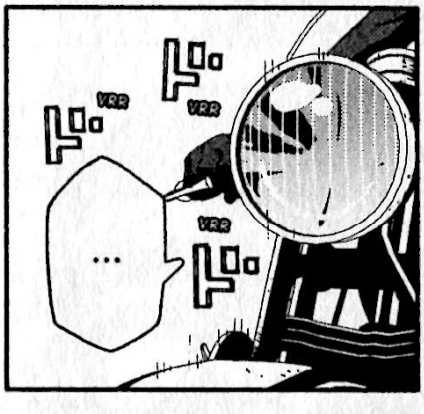

Day One
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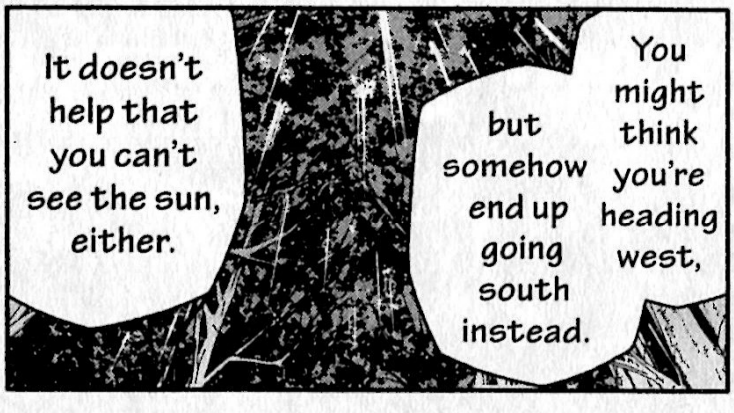

Chapter 4
Is it the caterpillars, Kino?

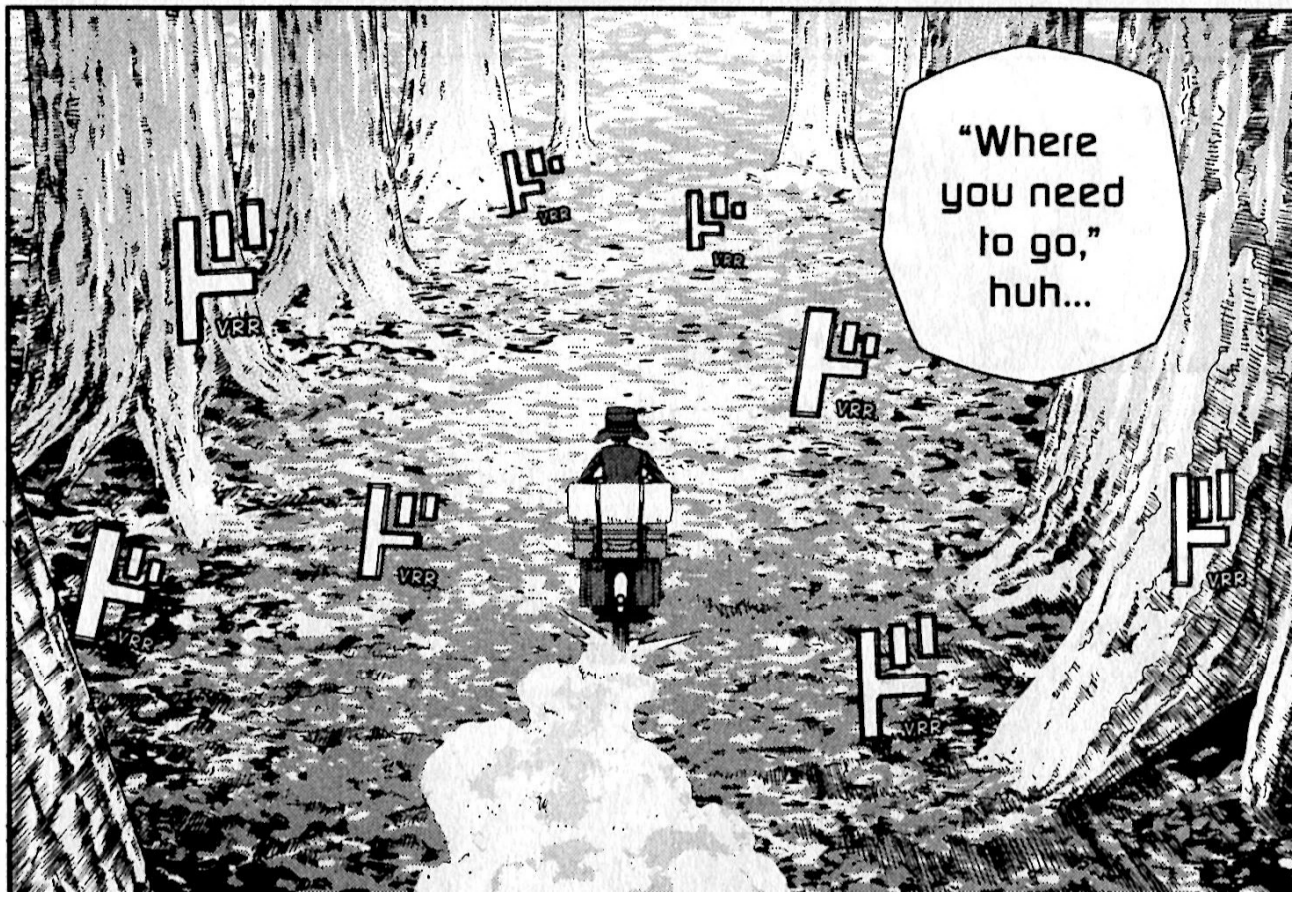

No.
...
Okay, maybe a little.


I'm not too fond of riding through the woods.
Do you know why, Hermes?


But the main issue is that it's easy to lose track of where you need to go.

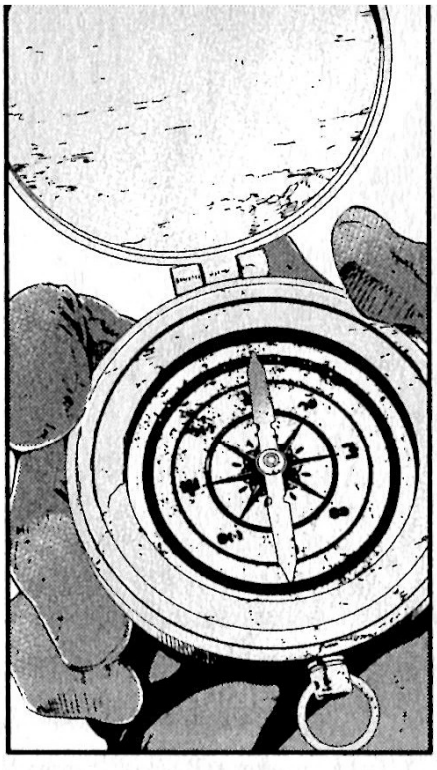

ドo VRR
ドo VRR
ドo VRR
ドo VRR
...

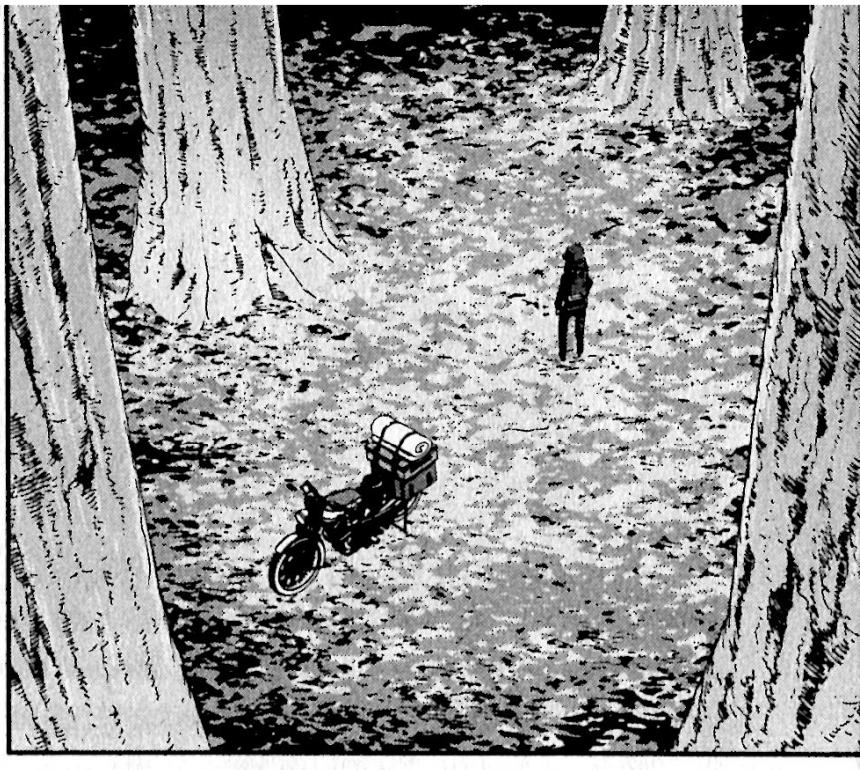

You might think you're heading west, but somehow end up going south instead.
It doesn't help that you can't see the sun, either.

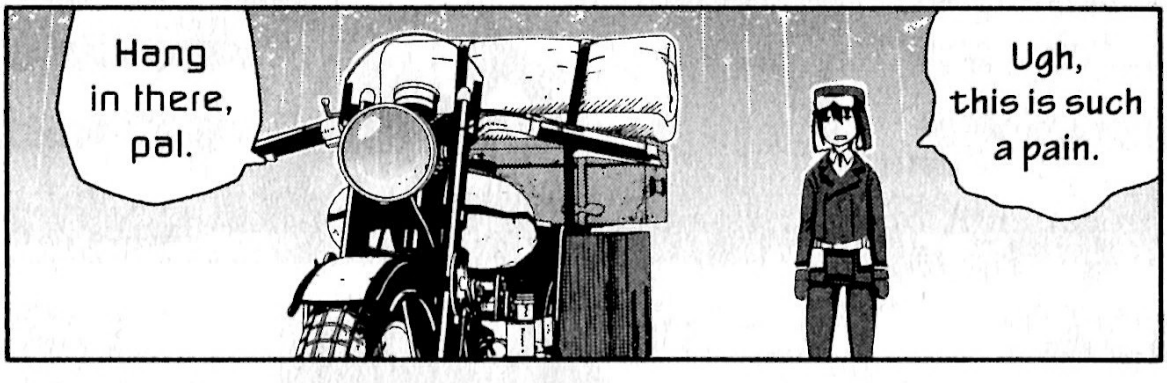

"Where you need to go," huh...
ドo VRR
ドo VRR
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ドo VRR
ドo VRR
ドo VRR
ドo VRR

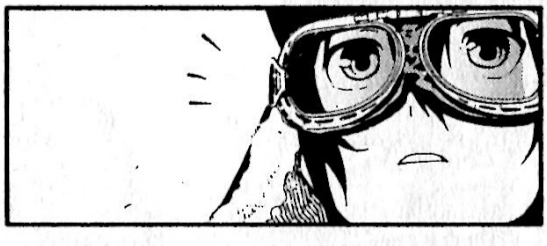


Chapter 4
Three Men Along the Tracks
-On the Rails-



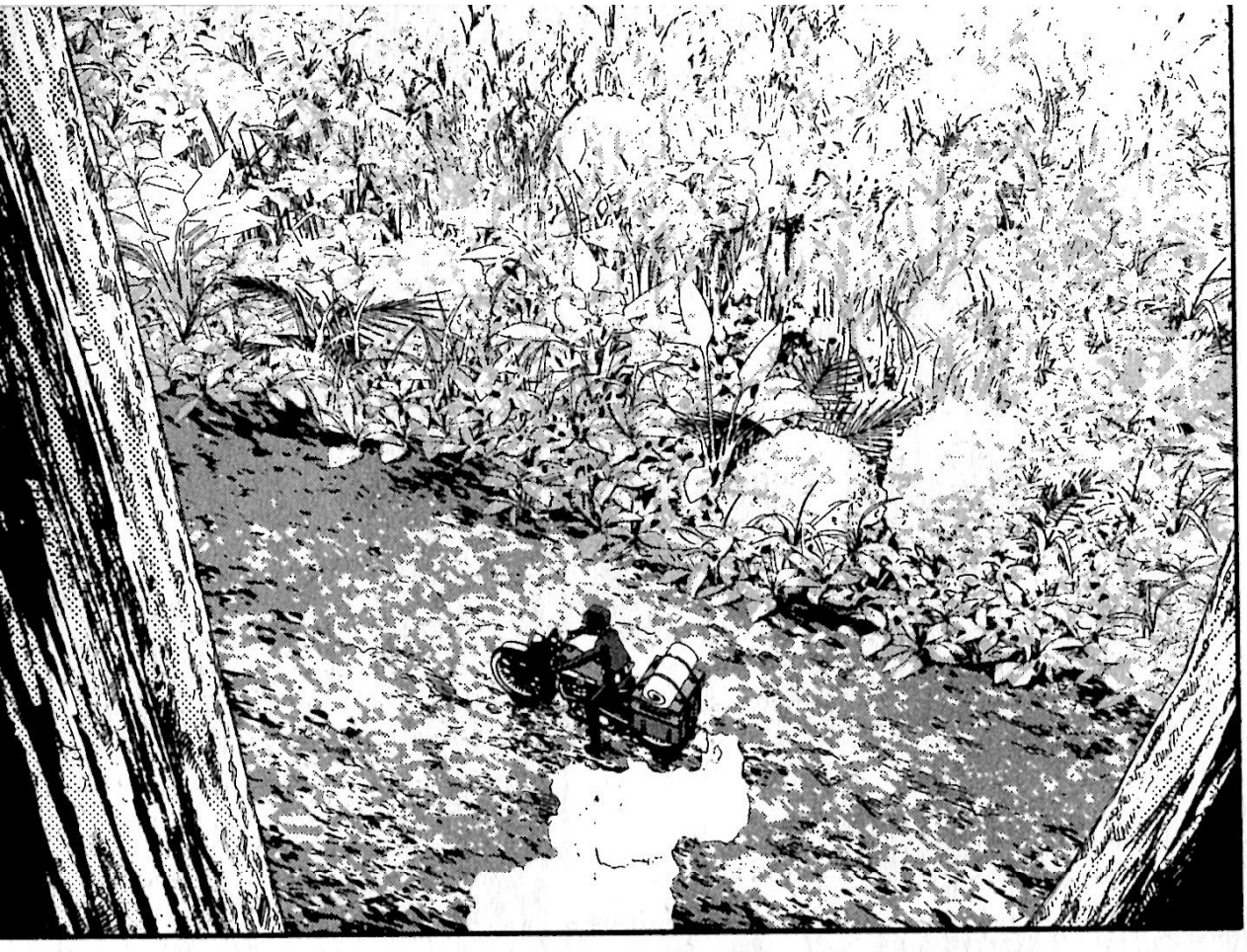


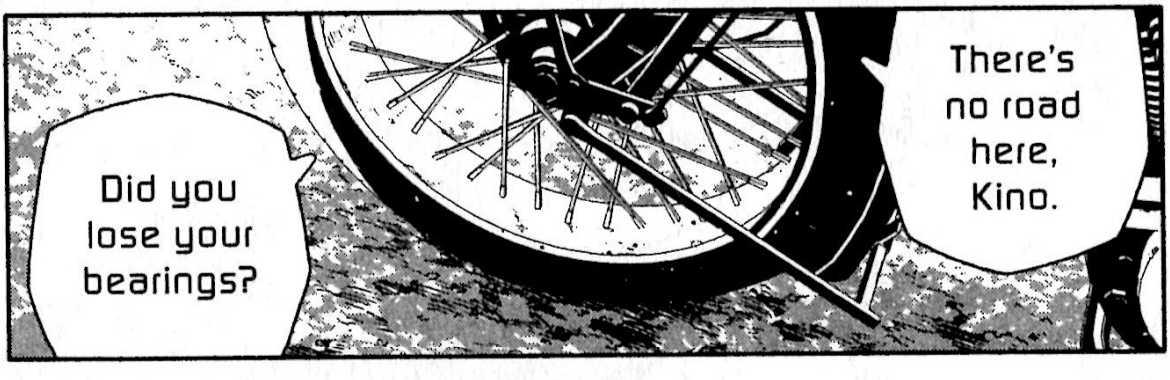

Hang in there, pal.
Ugh, this is such a pain.

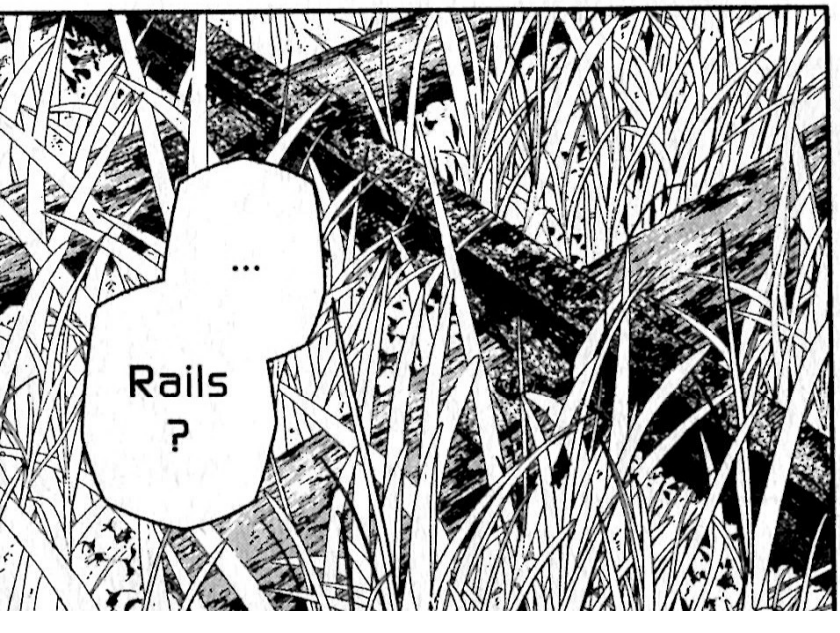





You think.
If we keep heading due north, we'll reach the end of this giant forest...
I think.
ドド BRRT




There's no road here, Kino.
Did you lose your bearings?

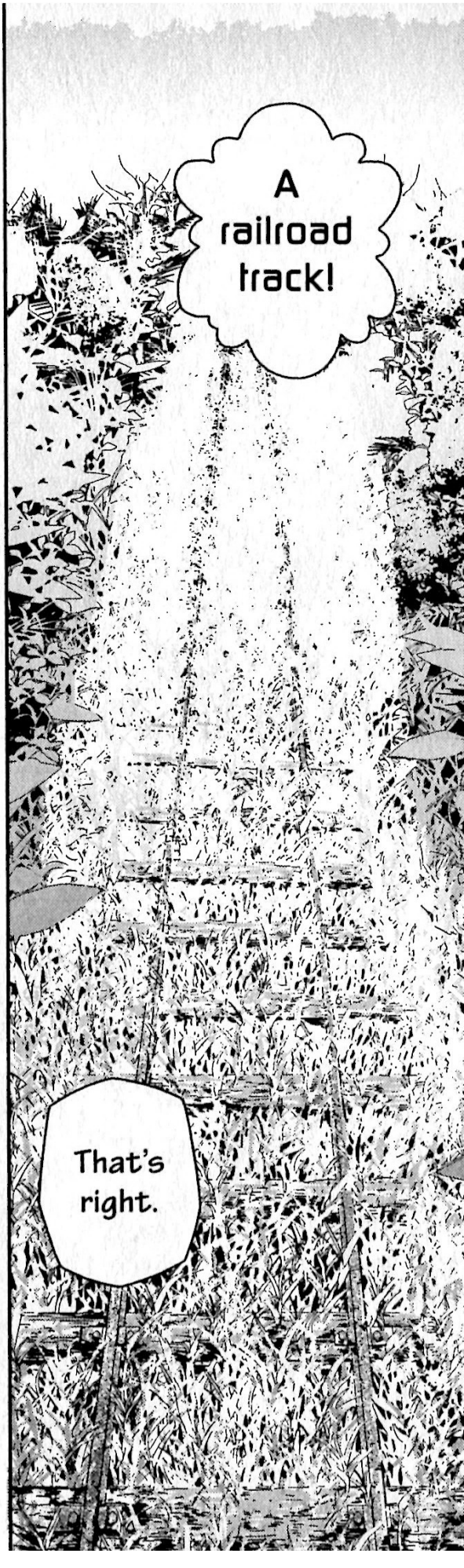

...
Rails ?

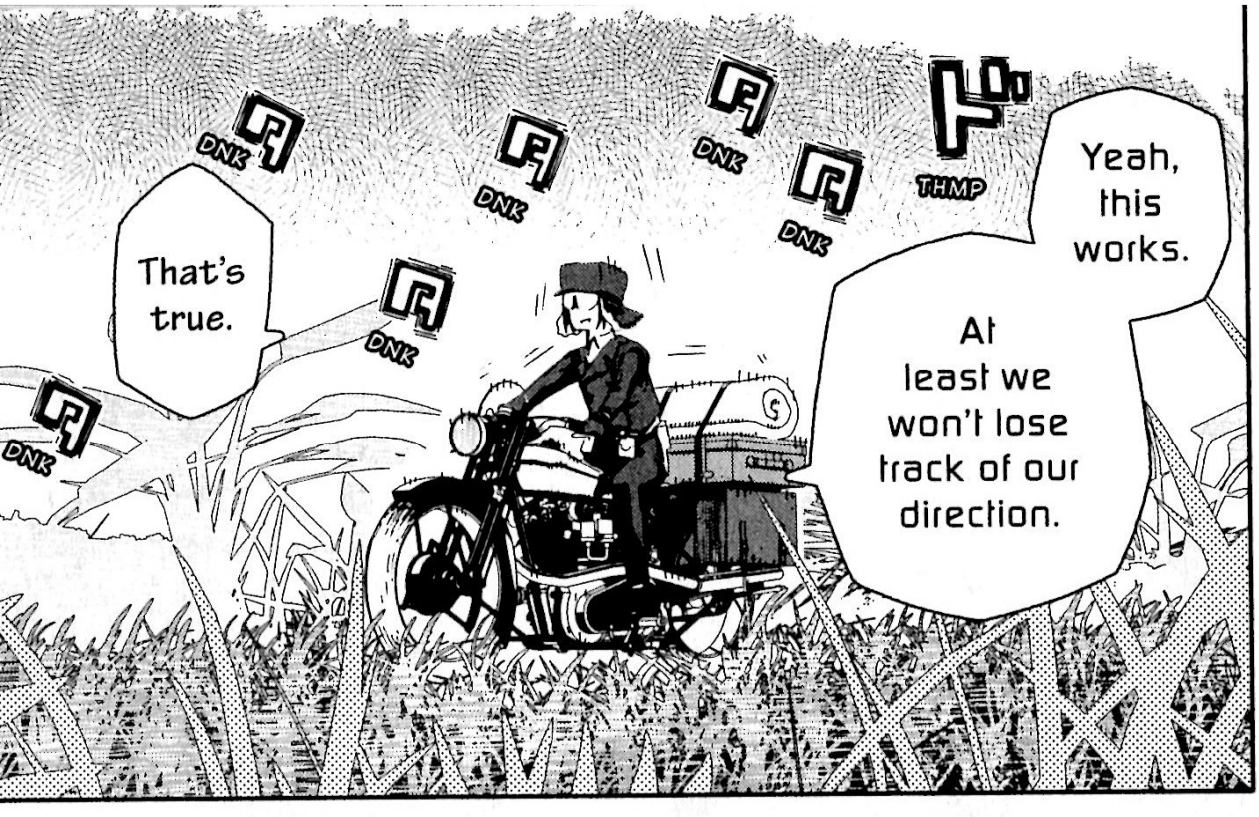

No, it's all right. I think this'll work.
?


So that's what those directions meant.
They said a motorrad should be able to traverse it.
I get it.
What if a train comes, though?

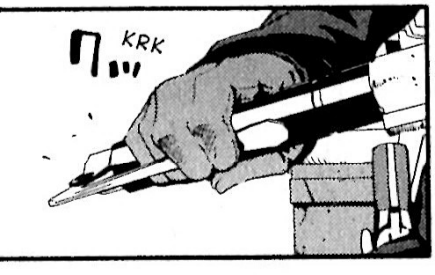

The track's overgrown with weeds, and the rails are rusty.
I don't think it's in use anymore...
ド BRRT
ド BRRT
ド BRRT
ド BRRT
ド BRRT

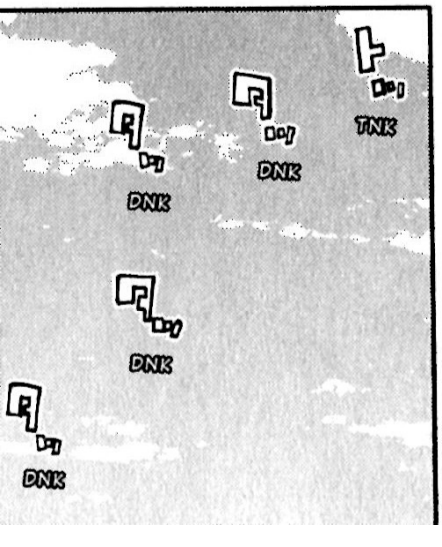

HUP.
VROOM


A railroad track!
That's right.

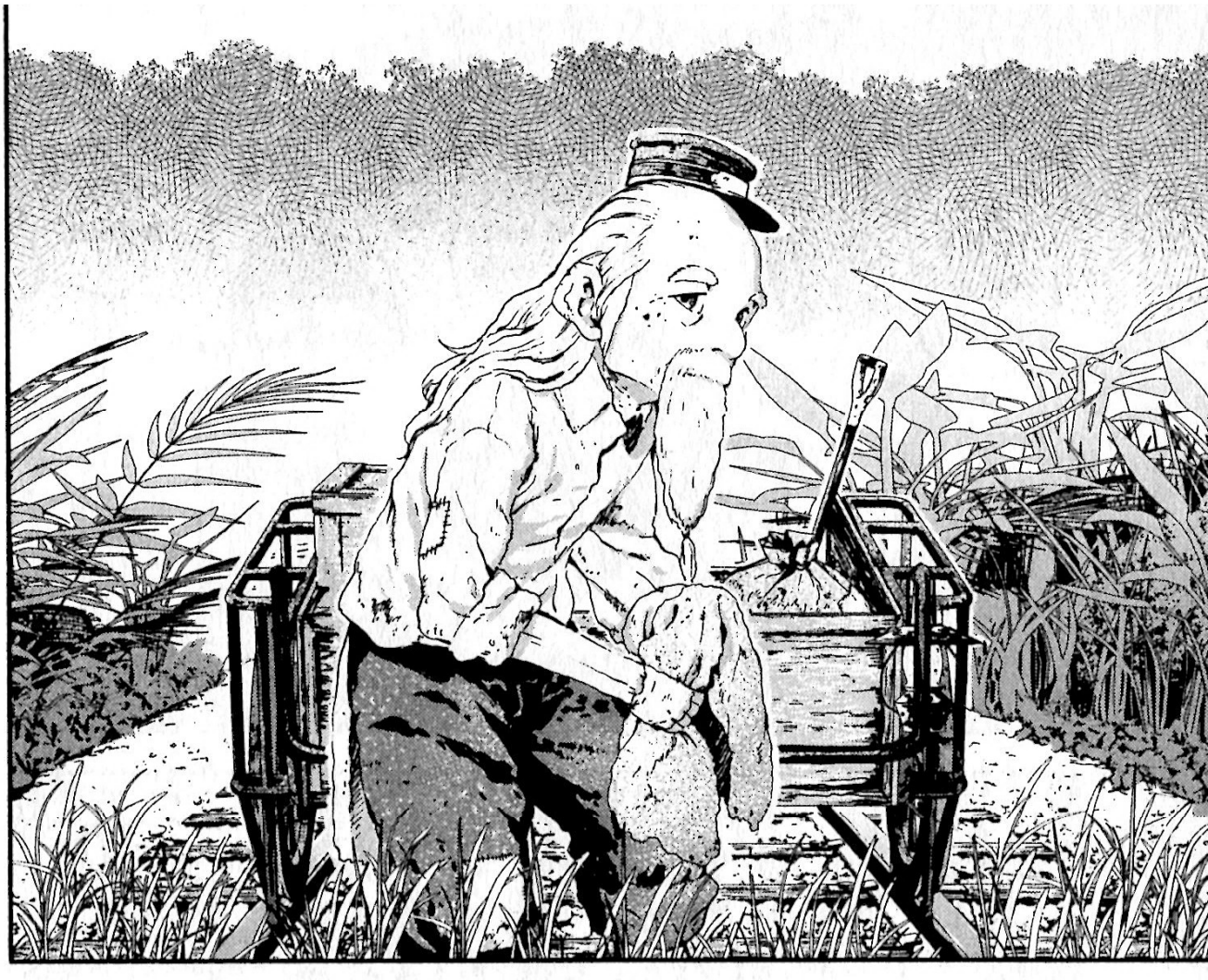

DNK
DNK
DNK
DNK
THMP
That's true.
Yeah, this works.
At least we won't lose track of our direction.


DNK
DNK
DNK
DNK
DNK
!


KRK

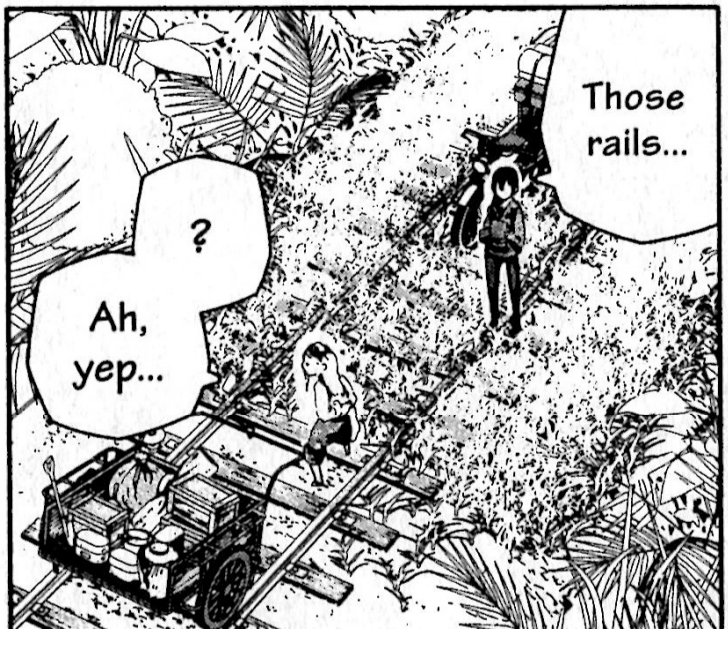

DNK
DNK
TNK
DNK
DNK
DNK


Kino, there's someone up ahead.

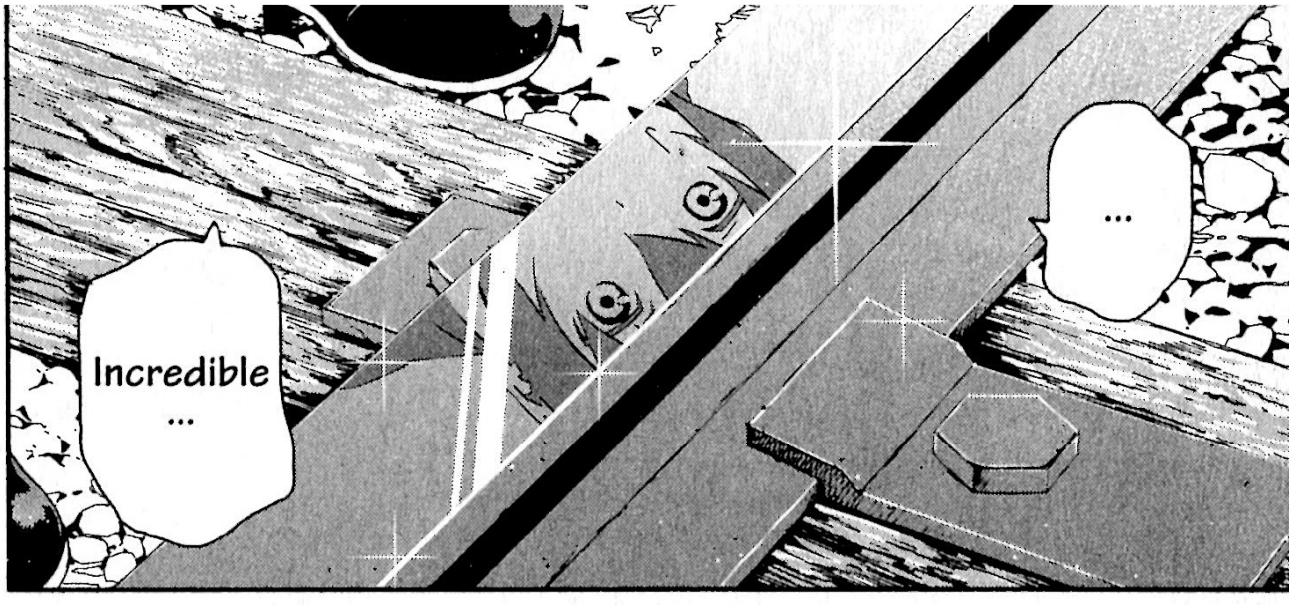


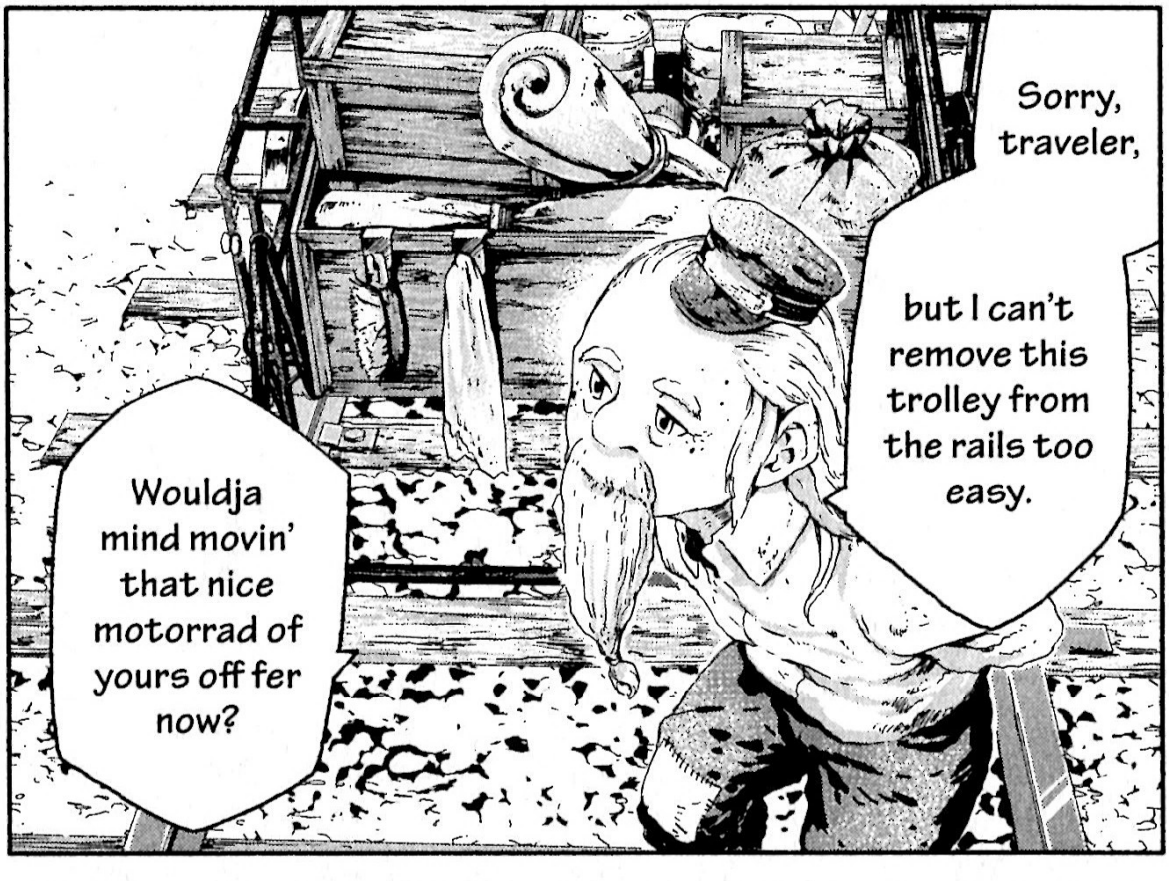

Ah!
...


Good day.
Hey, traveler.


Those rails...
?
Ah, yep...


I'm fixin' 'em up.

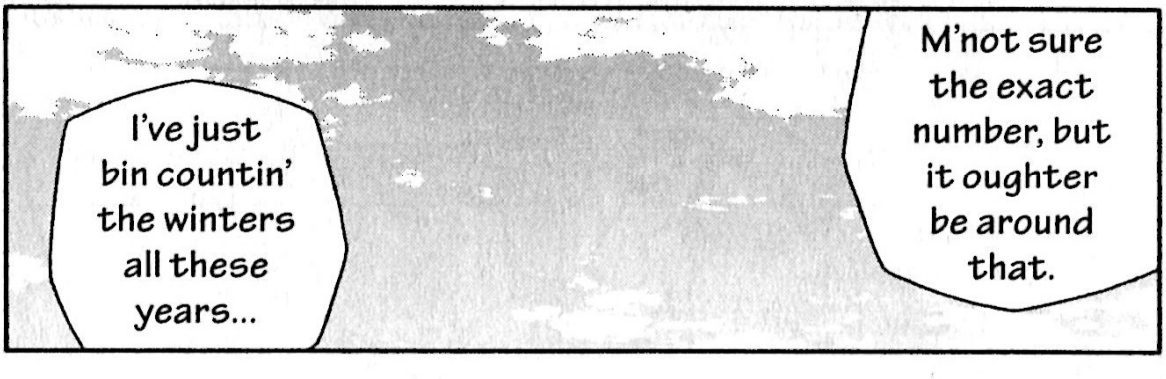

Incredible ...
...


Wouldja mind movin' that nice motorrad of yours off fer now?
Sorry, traveler,
but I can't remove this trolley from the rails too easy.


Oh, right.
Yes, of course I will.

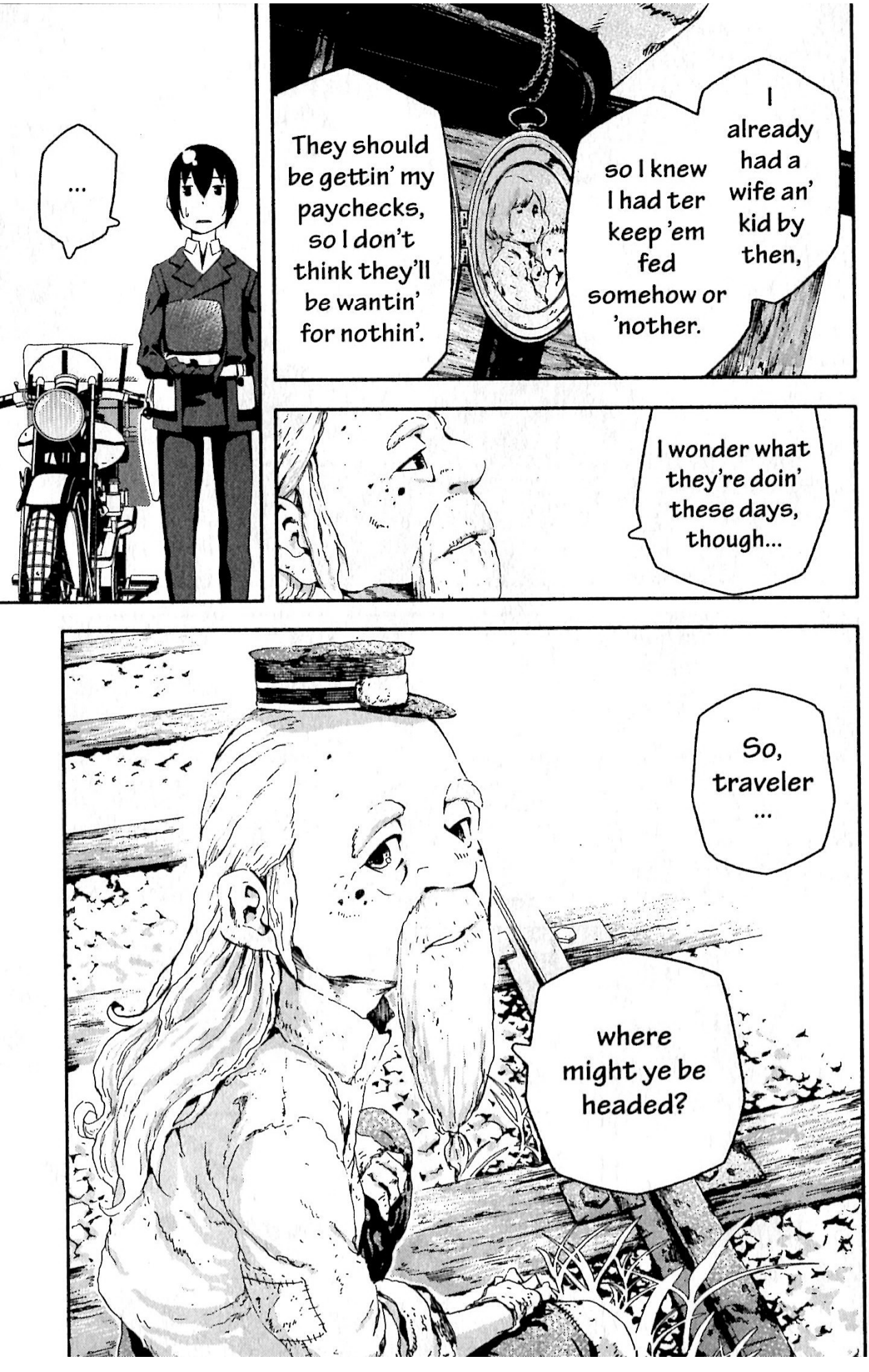

Did you do all this yourself?
Removing the weeds and polishing the rails...
Uhm...
Do you mind if I ask you a question ...?
Sure. S'my job, y'see.
Been doin' it for ages now.
How long is "ages", exactly?
...

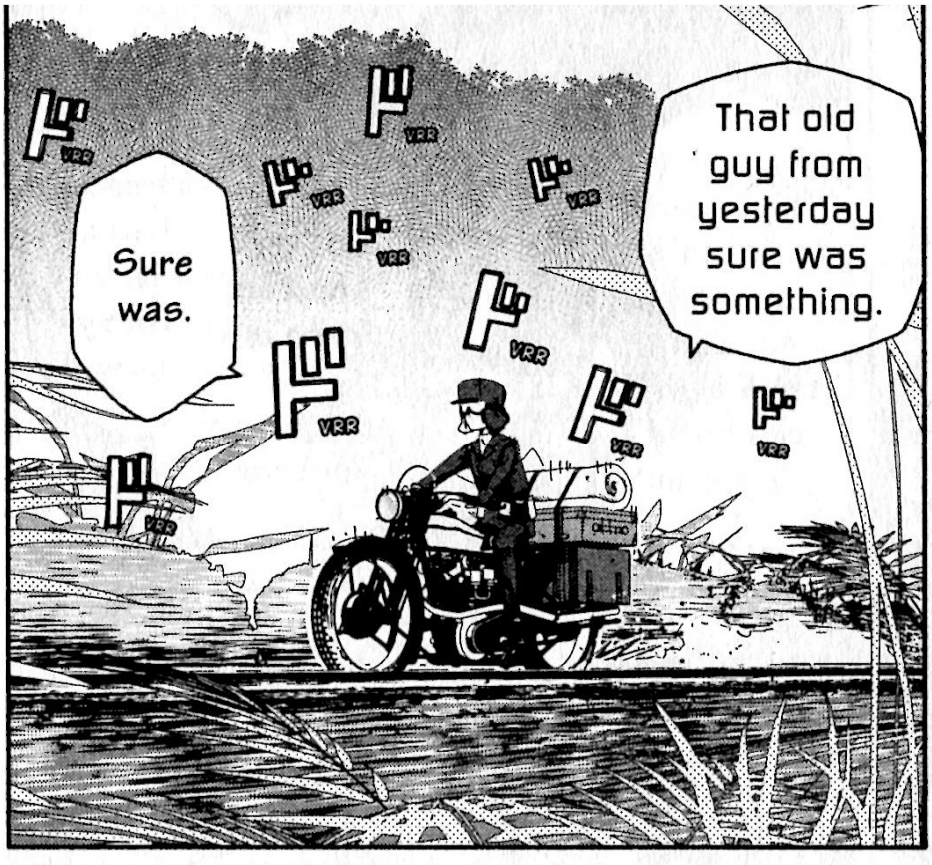

Fifty years ?!
Fifty years, I s'pose.

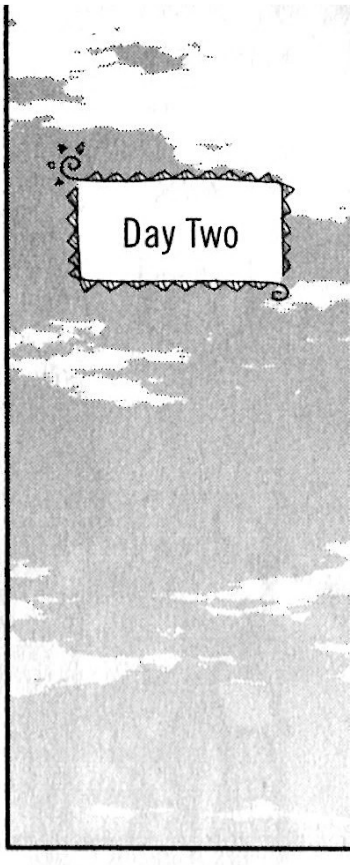

I've just bin countin' the winters all these years...
M'not sure the exact number, but it oughter be around that.

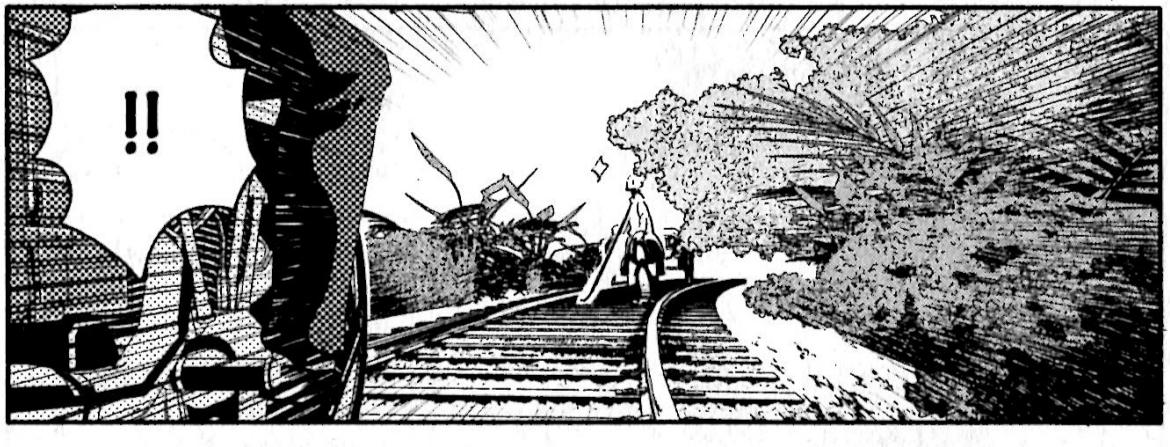

You've never once returned to the land you came from?
S'right.

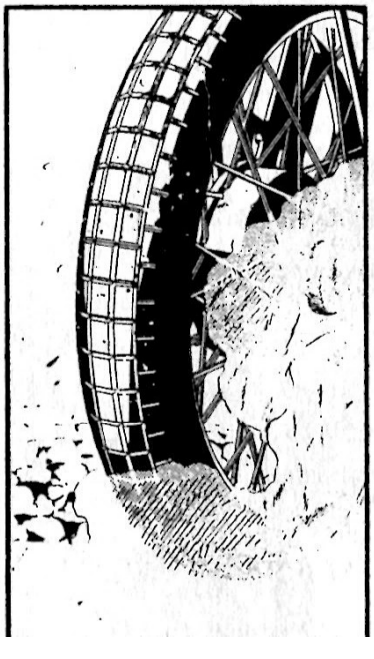

I took a job wit' the railroad when I was 18.
An' they haven't told me ter stop yet, so on I go.
They might want ter use some o' these old rails someday,
so they asked me ter clean 'em up best I can.

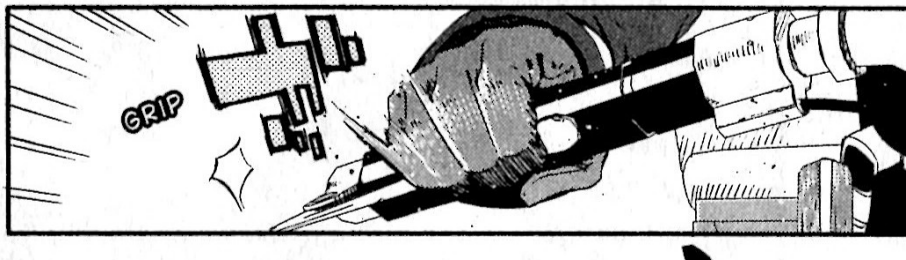

...
I already had a wife an' kid by then,
so I knew I had ter keep 'em fed somehow or 'nother.
They should be gettin' my paychecks, so I don't think they'll be wantin' for nothin'.
I wonder what they're doin' these days, though...
So, traveler ...
where might ye be headed?


That old guy from yesterday sure was something.
Sure was.
ドゥ VRR


Day Two

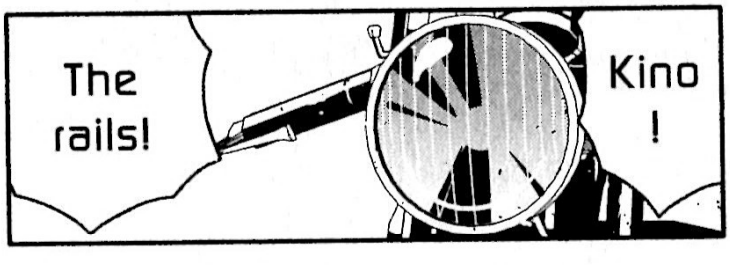

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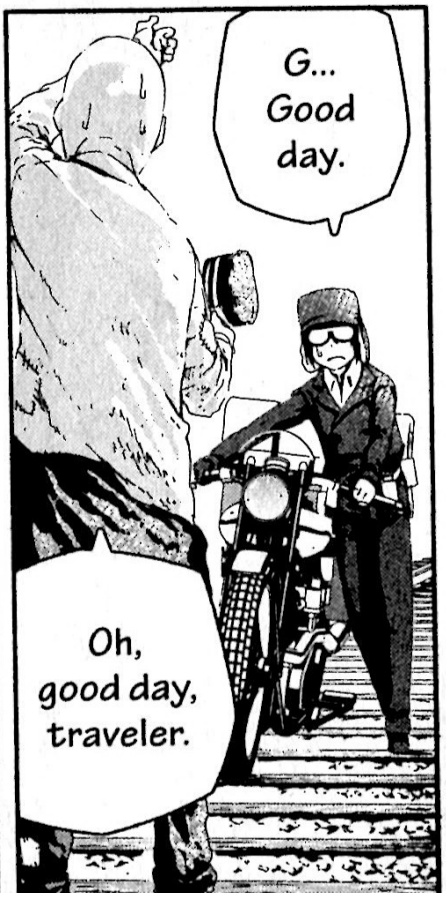


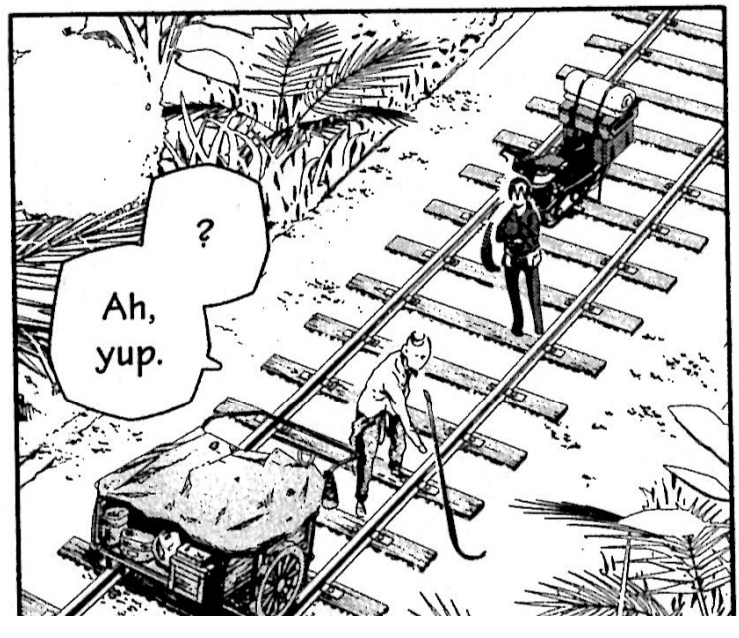

GRIP



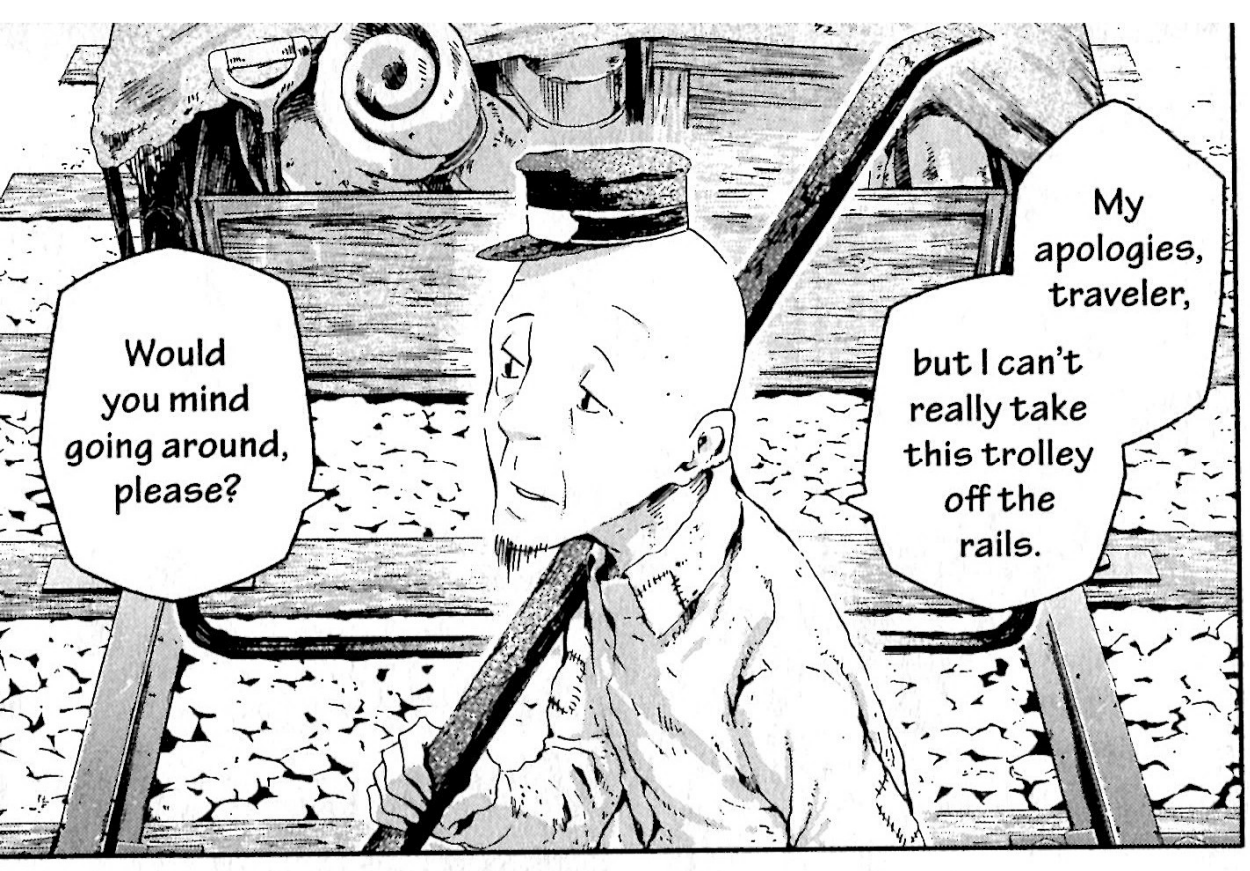



The rails!
Kino !

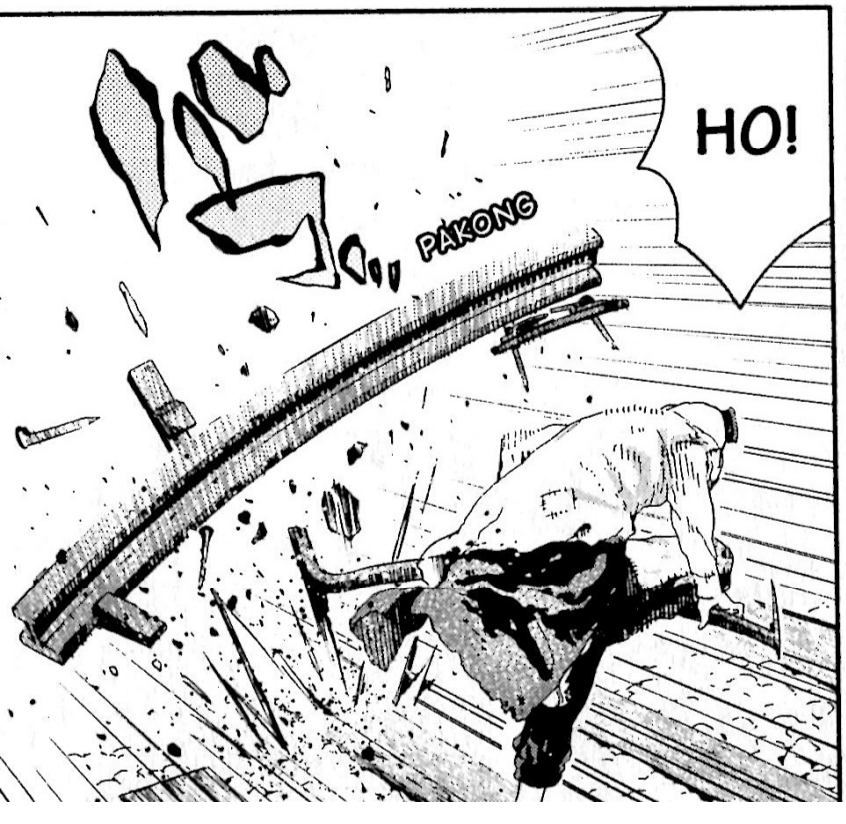

G... Good day.
Oh, good day, traveler.

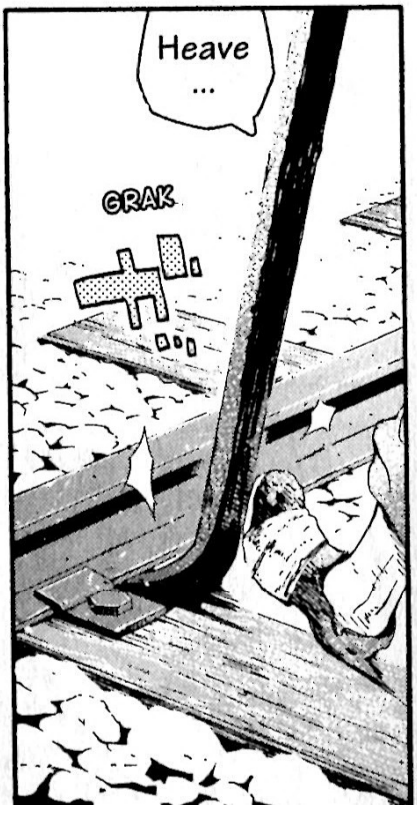

?
Ah, yup.

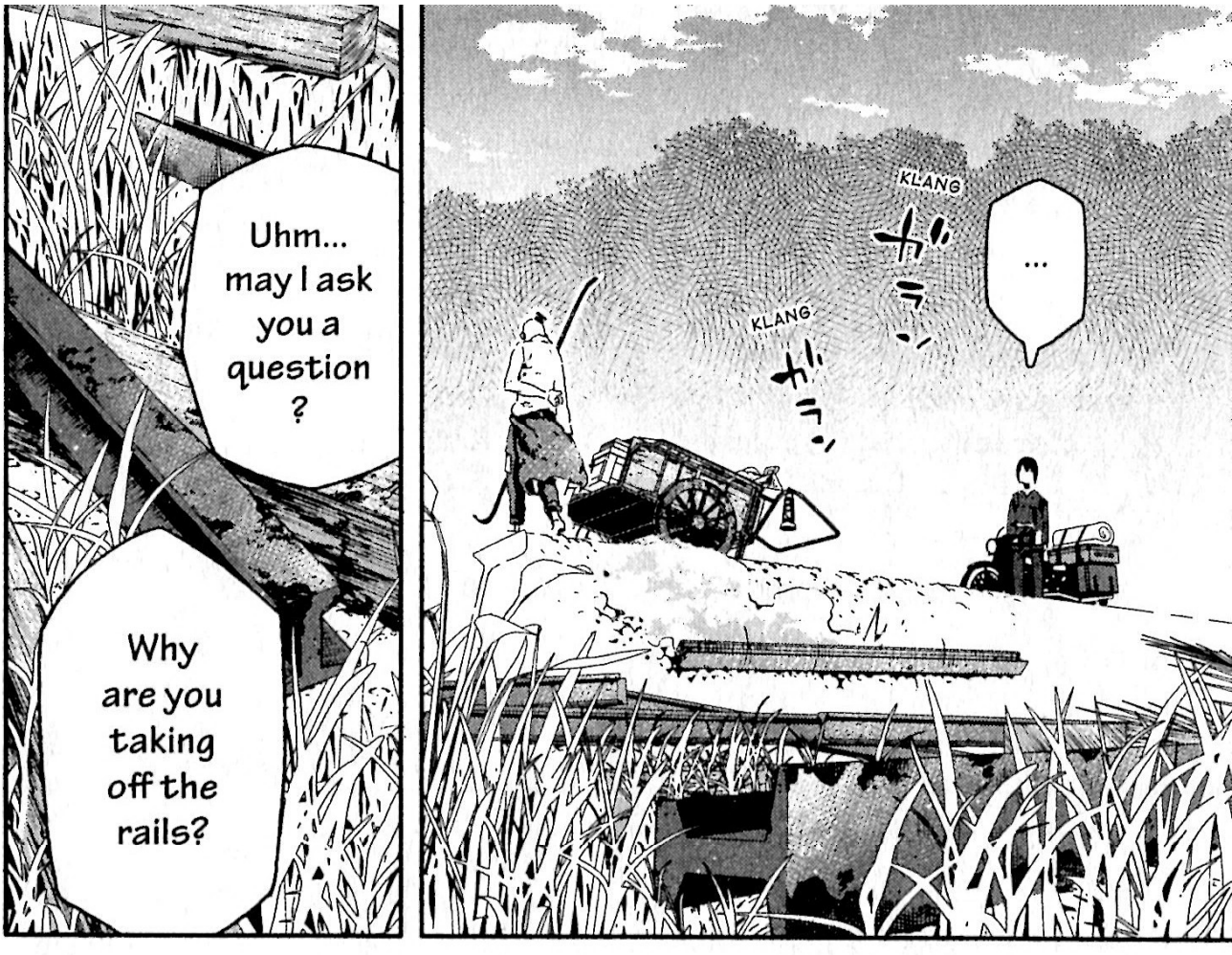

I TOOK 'EM OFF.


My apologies, traveler,
but I can't really take this trolley off the rails.
Would you mind going around, please?

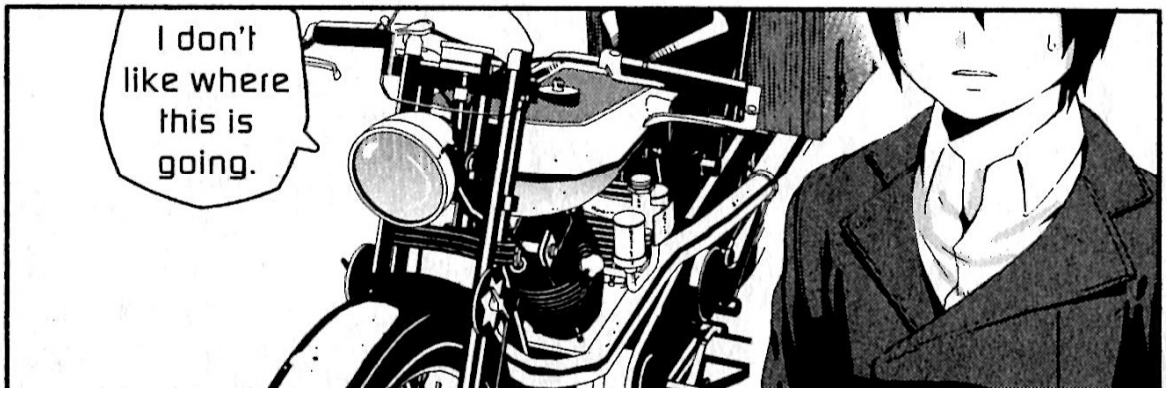

Ah, right.
Yes, of course... I'll do that.


HO!
PAKONG

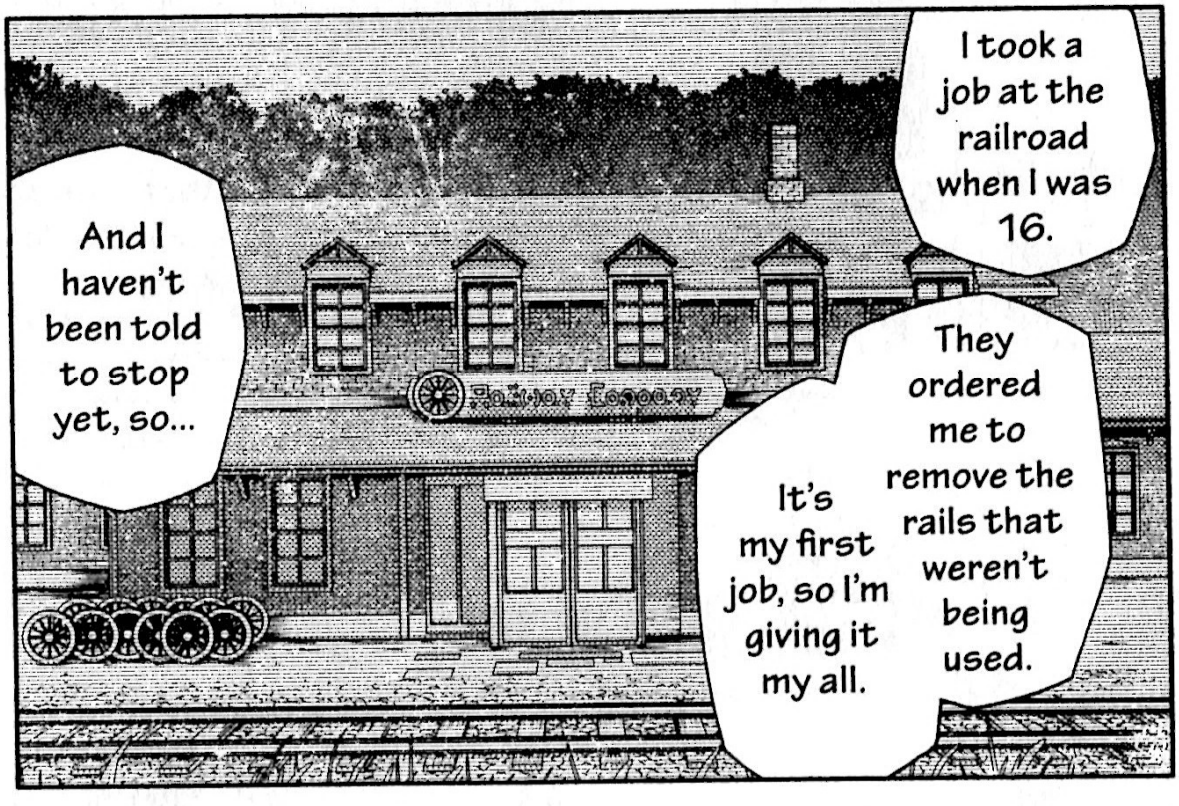

Heave ...
GRAK

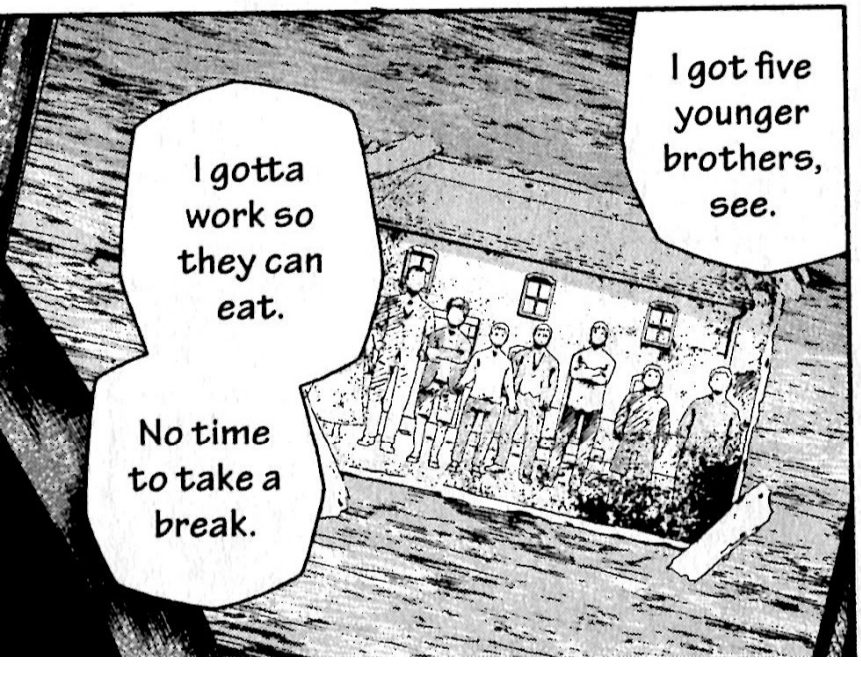

Uhm... may I ask you a question ?
Why are you taking off the rails?
KLANG
KLANG
...


Been doing it alone for ages.
Gotta clear away the railroad ties, too.
It's my job.

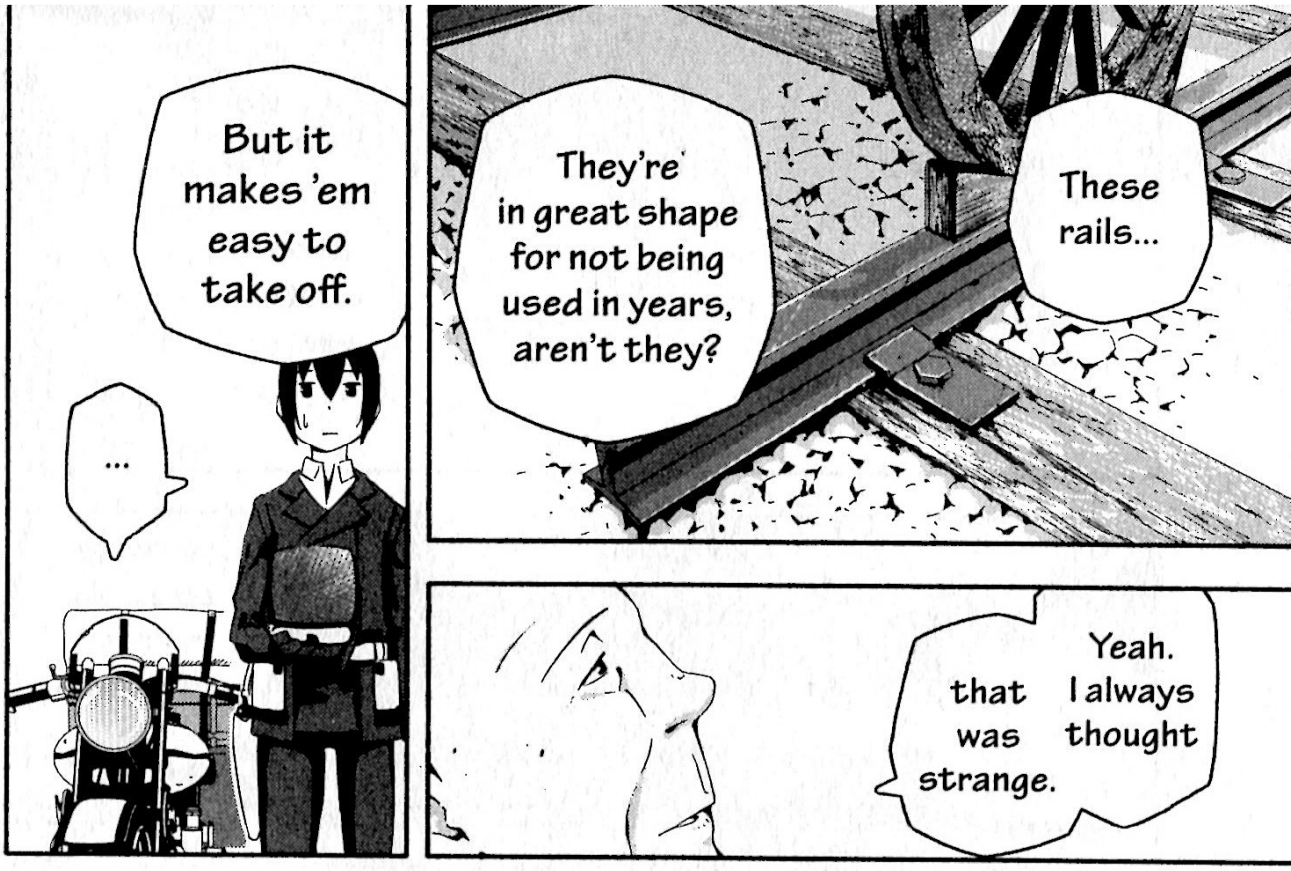

I don't like where this is going.


Would you say... about 50 years?
Can't say for sure.


I took a job at the railroad when I was 16.
They ordered me to remove the rails that weren't being used.
It's my first job, so I'm giving it my all.
And I haven't been told to stop yet, so...

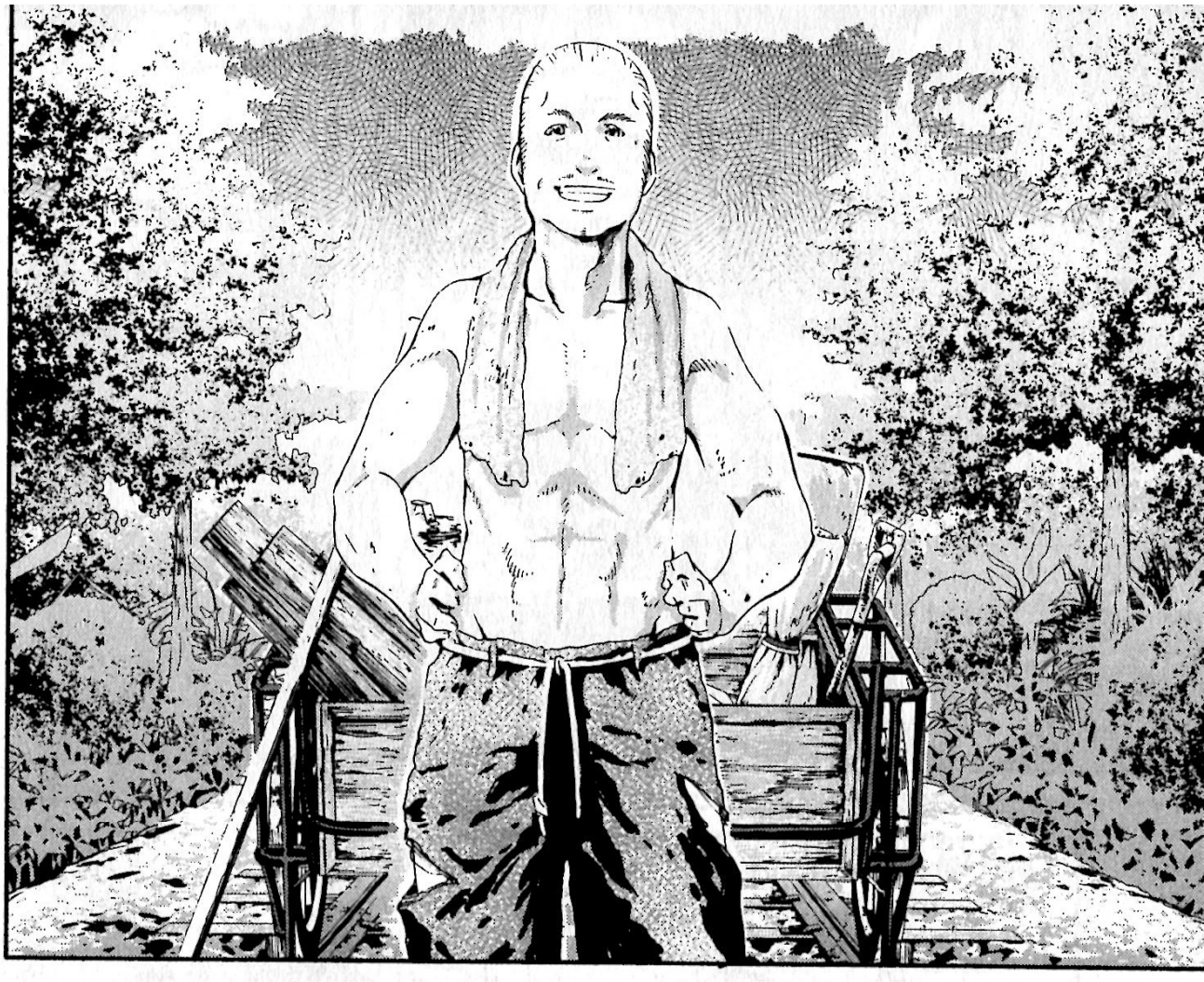

I got five younger brothers, see.
I gotta work so they can eat.
No time to take a break.

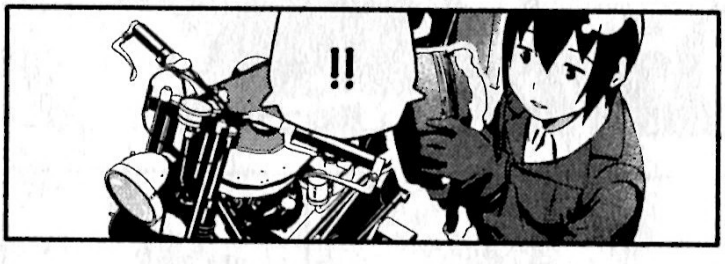

You haven't gone back home?
Nope ...


But it makes 'em easy to take off.
...
These rails...
They're in great shape for not being used in years, aren't they?
Yeah. I always thought that was strange.

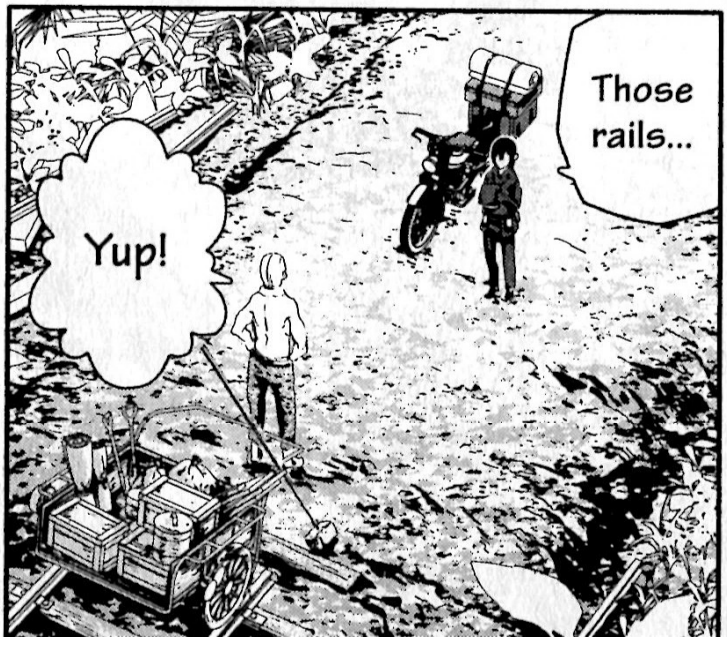

So, traveler ... where might you be headed?


This is rough.
RATTLE
RATTLE
RATTLE
RATTLE
Sure is.
Day Three
!
RATTLE
RATTLE
RATTLE
KREE
SQUEEZE

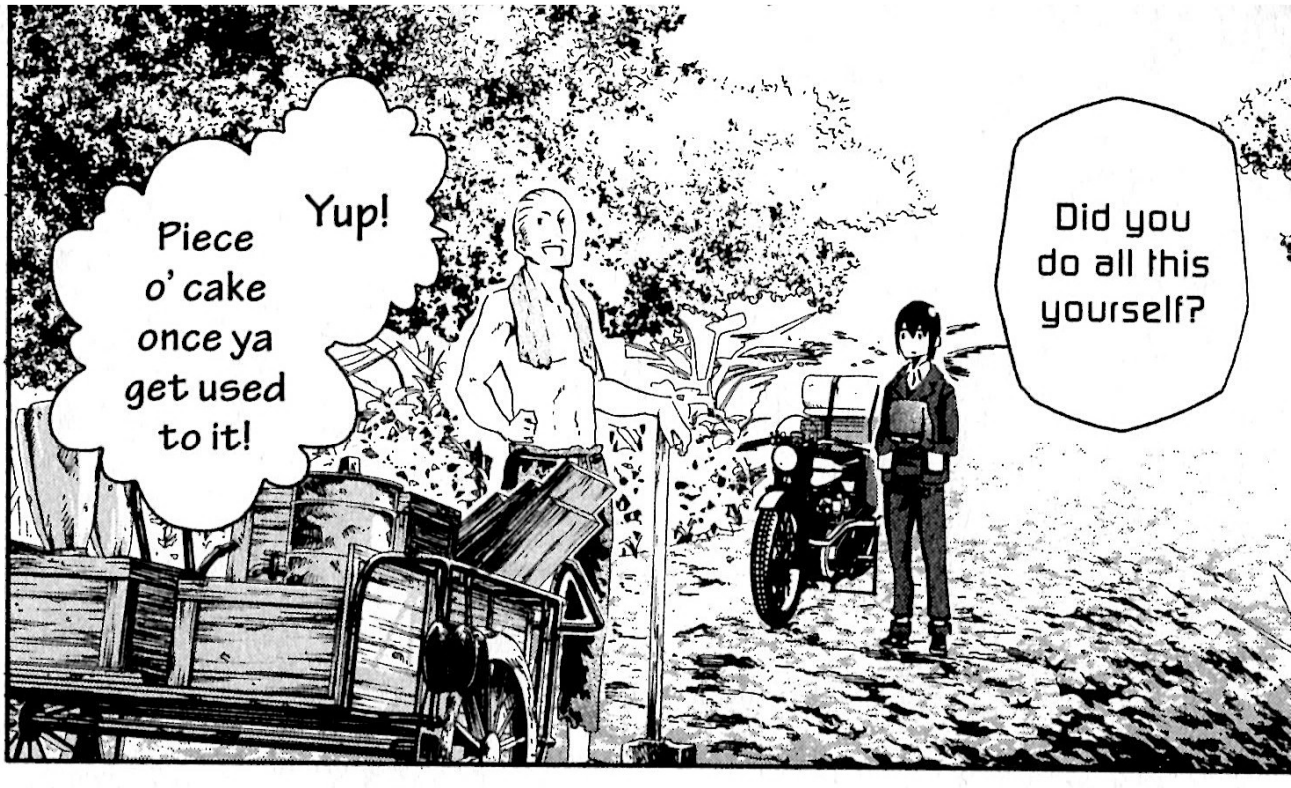



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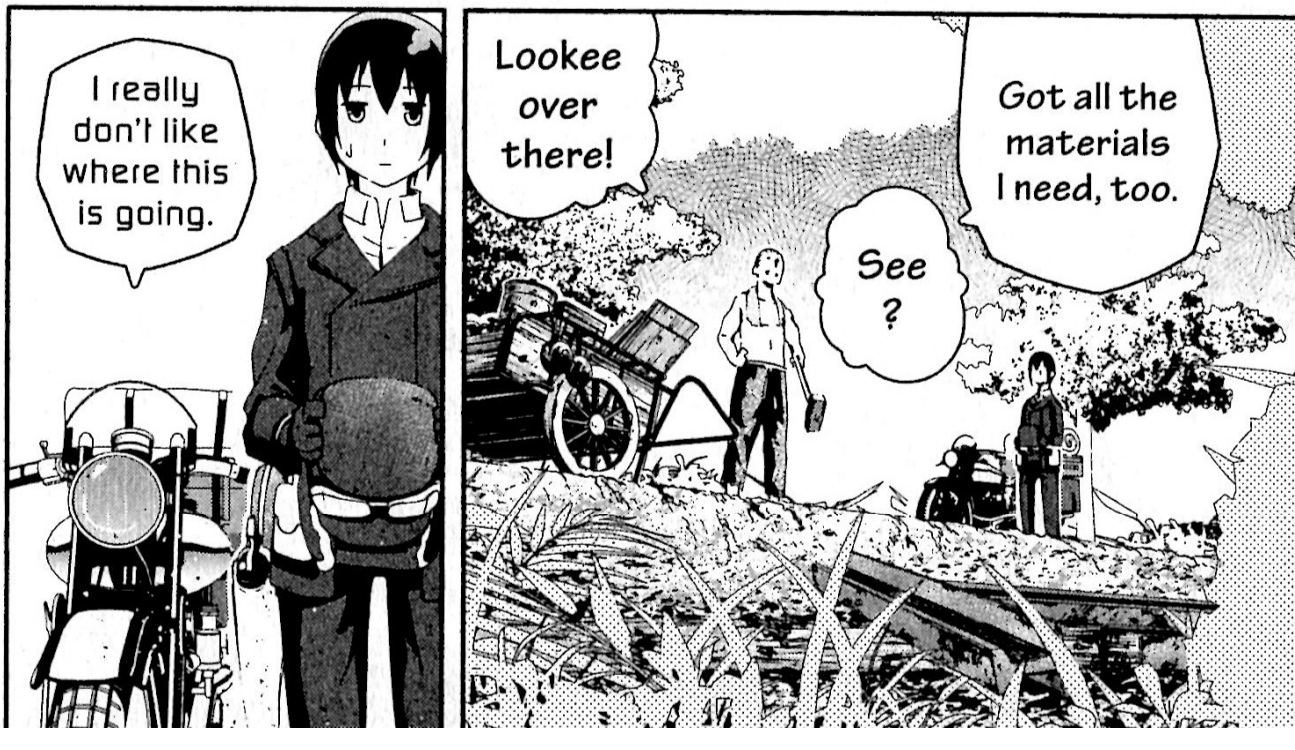

Good day.
Hey there, traveler!


Those rails...
Yup!


I LAID 'EM DOWN.

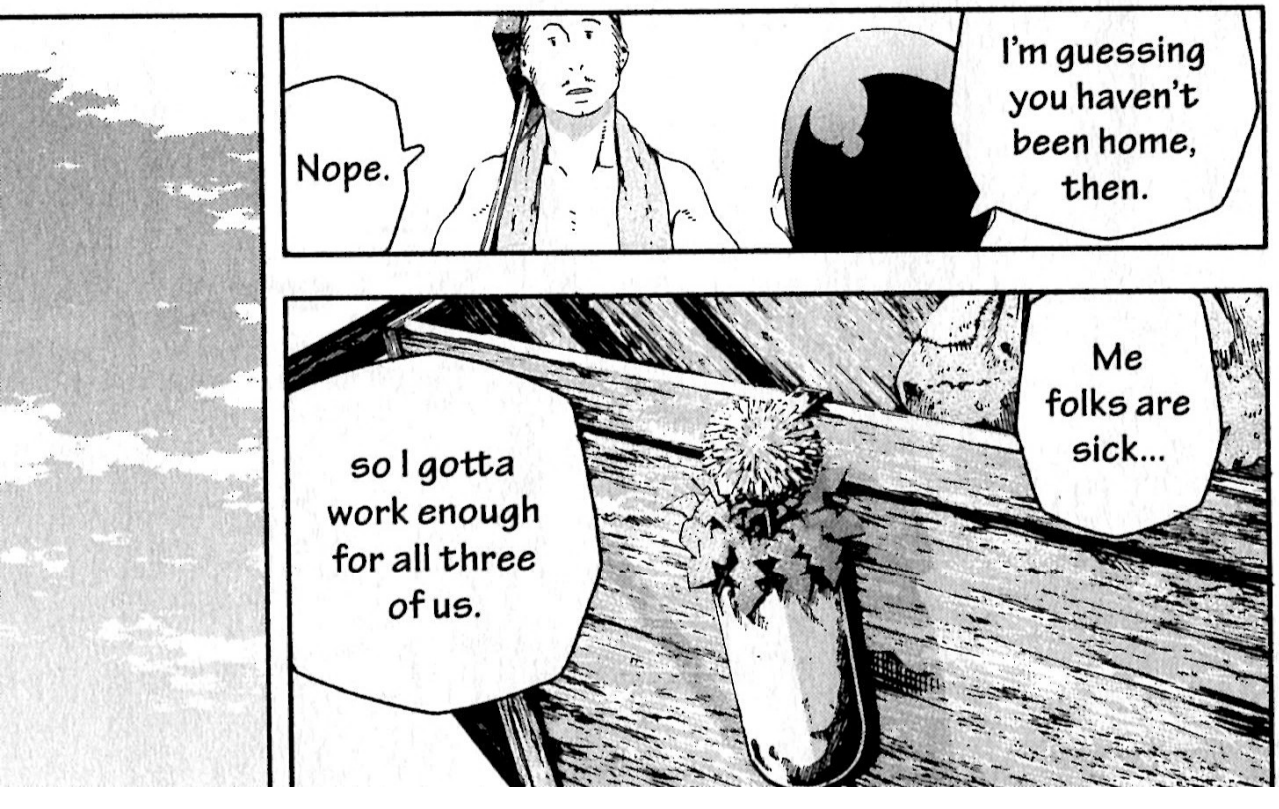

Did you do all this yourself?
Yup!
Piece o' cake once ya get used to it!

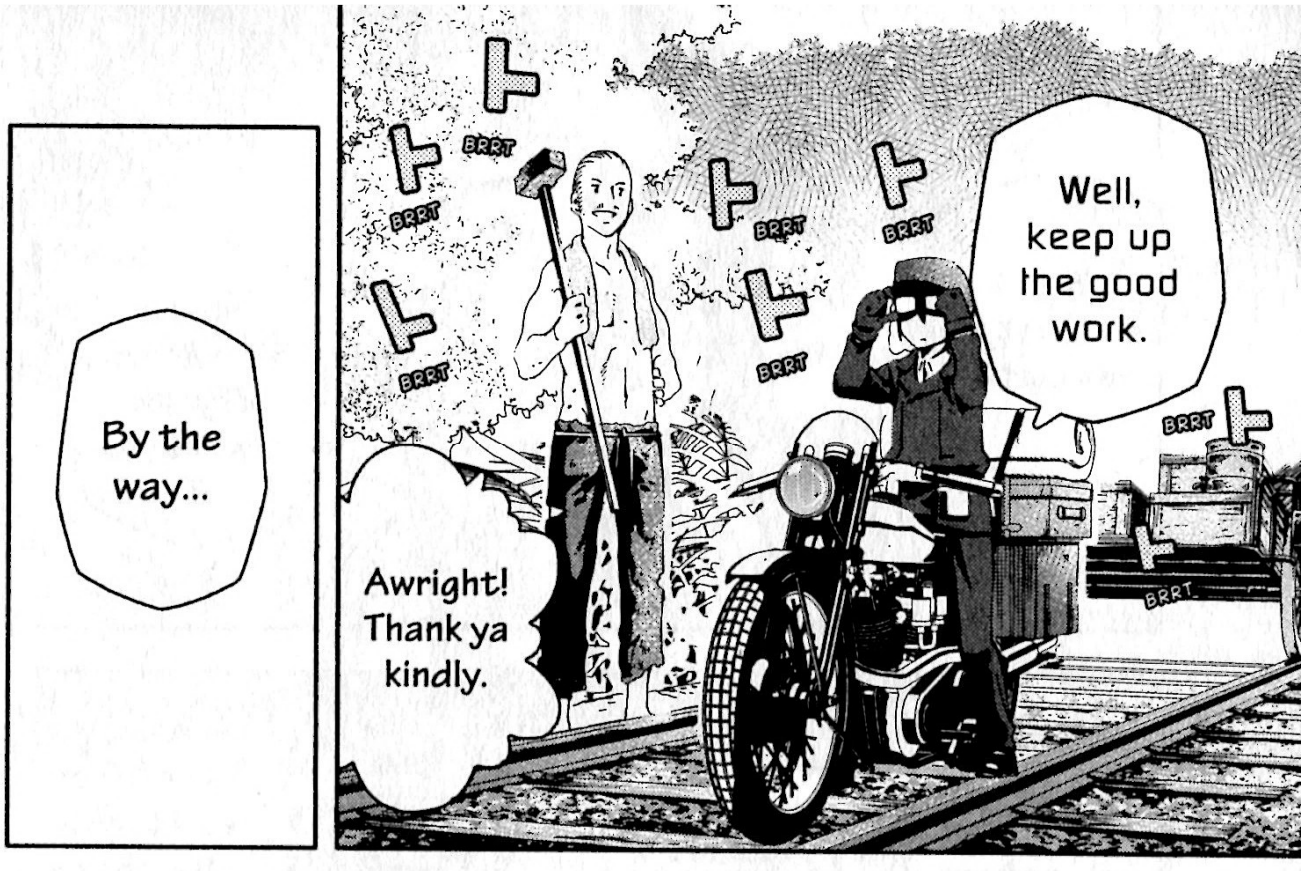

I put down the ties, lay the rails,
and keep 'em in place with spikes.


Got all the materials I need, too.
Lookee over there!
See ?
I really don't like where this is going.


I'm not so great at estimatin'.
Been workin' so long ... musta been about 50 years now, maybe ?


And they haven't told me to stop yet, so here I am.
They said to fix up some old lines in case they wanna use 'em again.
When I was 15 or so, I took a job with the railroad.


Nope.
I'm guessing you haven't been home, then.
so I gotta work enough for all three of us.
Me folks are sick...

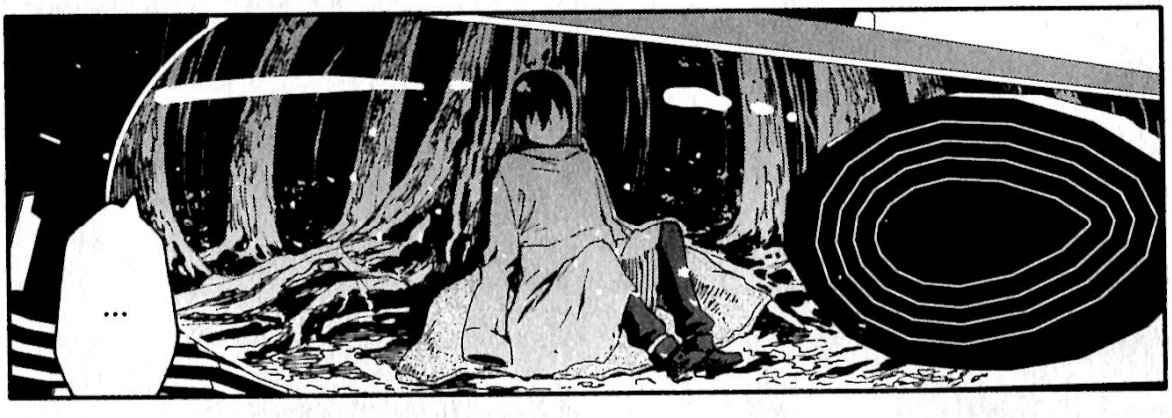

By the way...
BRRT
Well, keep up the good work.
Awright! Thank ya kindly.

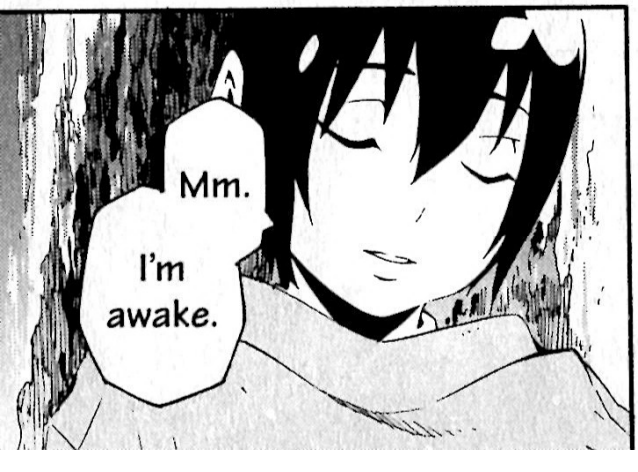

Where're ya headed, traveler?

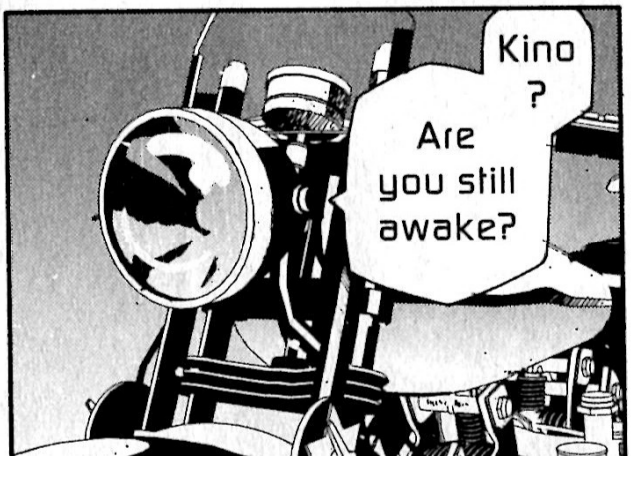
...


Where I need to go.


KRAKLE
KRAKLE
KRAKLE
Epilogue
Lost in the Forest: a


...


Mm.
I'm awake.


Kino ?
Are you still awake?


You know ...
motorrads are happiest when they're moving.
A journey means I move every day,
so I really enjoy being on this journey.


Oh. Huh?
Where'd that come from?
FLUMP
Come on, Kino.
Haven't you heard of a syllogic?


RUSTLE
...
...
RUSTLE

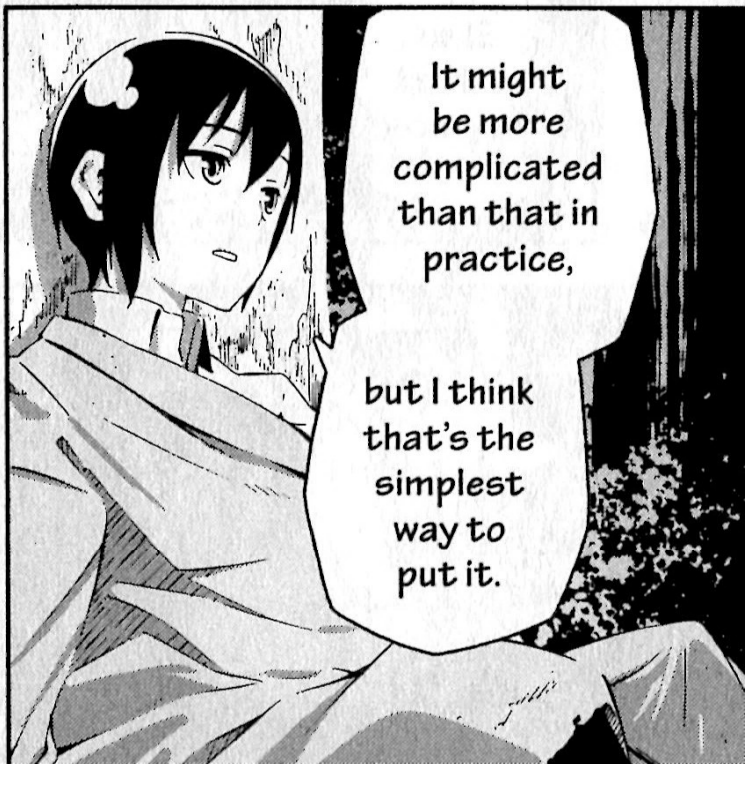

Yeah, that.
... SYLLO-GISM ?


KRAKLE
KRAKLE
What makes humans want to go on journeys, I mean.
What about it?
Well ... it just kinda makes me wonder...
Do you mean all humans? Or me specifically?
Start with all humans.
...
Let me see.


They want to go somewhere they've never been before,
eat foods they've never eaten before,
talk to people they've never met before.
see things they've never seen before,


So what about you, Kino?
Why do you keep traveling?




It might be more complicated than that in practice,
but I think that's the simplest way to put it.


Given your skills with that Persuader, I'm sure you could find work anywhere.
You could've stayed with that teacher of yours, too.
I mean, I know you've got nowhere to go back to.
But you've been in terrible situations or almost been killed so many times.
Considering how much you've suffered, don't you ever think about settling down somewhere?
That's true.
I can't say you're wrong about that.
...
So why do you keep going?
KRAKLE
KRAKLE
KRAKLE
KRAKLE




FSHHH


I'm not sure.
I guess I... don't really know why...

Afterword!

Hello, dear reader of *Kino's Journey: The Beautiful World*! I'm the author of the original light novels, Keiichi Sigsawa (Note: An author. Cannot fly).

I've been given the honor of writing the afterword this time, to my great pleasure. Hopefully I don't write so much that the text ends up having to be really small!

As is often the case with paperback afterwords, I'll be sure to avoid spoiling the contents of the book, so it's all right to read this first, if you like!

Now, with the release of this first volume, I can hardly contain my happiness. I'm so thrilled, I feel like flying through the sky! I can't actually fly, though.

Kino's Journey was my debut as an author and is also my most well-known work, and while it's even been made into anime, games, and so on, this is the first time it's been adapted into a manga. That's quite unusual these days, when most multi-media projects start with a manga.

Of course, the plans for a manga version have been in the works for a long time, but it kept falling through for one reason or another.

"Could it be that *Kino's Journey* is cursed to never become a manga...?" Naturally, I was starting to seriously worry. Maybe I did something wrong in a previous life? If anyone knows, please tell me via telepathy.

At any rate, this year (2017), seventeen years after the original book was released, Kodansha has made the manga version a reality! It's a miracle. The curse has finally been broken!

As far as the quality of the adaptation, I only have one word for my feelings: "Excited!" and "Gratified!" I'm sorry, that was two words.

Iruka Shiomiya's version of Kino is so sharp and stylish, and I can't get enough of the occasional cute expressions. The grin on my face as I read the finished manuscript must never be shared on social media.

Hermes looks very gallant and cool rendered in 3DCG, full of mechanical charm. I made a ridiculous amount of notes and retakes on the design (more than Kino's, in fact), and Shiomiya kindly went along with all of them. I don't have the words to fully express my gratitude.

I'll probably get in trouble if I don't wrap this up soon, so let me end by expressing my feelings.

The journey of our manga serialization is only just beginning, as is the journey of collecting them into tankobon volumes.

I hope that you will enjoy this journey with the manga version of Kino and Hermes. Will it lead to a fluffy bed with clean white sheets, or perhaps...?

Well, until we meet again in the next volume!

July 2017 Keiichi Sigsawa